



NGOs working on Country of Origin Information in Europe: A mapping exercise

Supported by



Background

In 2011 Asylum Research Consultancy (ARC) and the Dutch Council for Refugees (DCR) met in Budapest for the Hungarian Helsinki Committee (HHC) conference ‘Evidence and Country of Origin Information (COI) in the practice of European Courts’. This Conference was part of the HHC’s project on ‘COI in Judicial Practice’, which sought to map the structural differences and access to COI in judicial review procedures across Europe.¹ The conference mainly brought together Immigration Judges from across Europe, but also NGO representatives, COI researchers and academics. Whilst co-ordination already exists between State COI Units, especially in light of the developments in the European Asylum Support Office (EASO), we became aware of how little we knew of other NGOs working in COI research across Europe, and how such COI was being used in refugee status decision making.

We developed the idea to map the NGO actors working on COI and to identify whether there was an interest amongst these organisations to build a network to support each other in the work we do at the national level and at the same time to see whether we could find a way to jointly respond to developments at the European level in relation to COI.

This report summarises the answers to a questionnaire completed in July 2012 and updated information received in July 2013 to 23 participating organisations with the aim of providing a platform for future engagement and collaboration.

We are pleased to have the European Council on Refugees and Exiles’ (ECRE) support in this first step to map NGOs working on COI in Europe. We would like to thank ECRE and all organisations that filled in the questionnaire and their enthusiasm for this initiative.

Hiske van den Bergh – Dutch Council for Refugees (Vluchtelingenwerk Nederland)
Liz Williams and Stephanie Huber– Asylum Research Consultancy (ARC)

October 2013

¹ See Hungarian Helsinki Committee (July 2011) [Structural differences and access to country information \(COI\) at European courts dealing with asylum](#)

Contents

Methodology	p.4
Acronyms	p.5
Summary	p.6
Annex A Organisations and contact details	p.17
Annex B Responses to questionnaire	p.19

Methodology

We do not claim to have a full picture of all organisations working on COI in Europe, but we do hope to have included most NGO COI initiatives with this mapping exercise. We directed the mapping exercise at those organisations undertaking COI research as a routine part of their work, or who take a specific interest in the production of COI or use of COI in refugee status decision making. Relevant organisations were initially identified from ECRE's membership and organisations already known to ECRE, ARC and DCR on a professional basis. These organisations were then asked to recommend any other European NGOs working on COI. It was not our intention to include all the legal organisations that undertake COI research in the course of their case preparation.

A questionnaire was devised to capture the structure, focus and outputs, existence and nature of case-specific research services and general working practices of the organisations. It was also intended to identify the scope for future co-operation. The information has been summarised along these broad themes. The full list of questions posed can be viewed in [Annex B](#).

The aim of this mapping exercise was to identify NGOs, not State Units, working on COI.

22 NGOs and one specialised independent unit (the Irish Legal Aid Board) responded to our questionnaire from the following countries:

Austria: Austrian Red Cross/Austrian Centre for Country of Origin and Asylum Research and Documentation (ACCORD)

Belgium: Flemish Refugee Action [Vluchtelingenwerk Vlaanderen]; Asylos

Denmark: Danish Refugee Council (DRC) [Dansk Flygtninge Hjaelp]

France: Forum Réfugiés-COSI; Asylos

Germany: Informationsverbund Asyl & Migration

Greece: Asylos

Hungary: Hungarian Helsinki Committee [Magyar Helsinki Bizottság]

Ireland: Legal Aid Board

The Netherlands: Dutch Council for Refugees (DCR) [VluchtelingenWerk Nederland]

Norway: Norwegian Organization for Asylum Seekers (NOAS) [Norsk Organisasjon for Asylsøkere]

Poland: Helsinki Foundation for Human Rights (HFHR) [Helsińska Fundacja Praw Człowieka]

Romania: Romanian National Council for Refugees (CNRR) [Consiliul National Roman pentru Refugiati]

Serbia: Asylum Protection Centre (APC) [Centar za Zaštitu i pomoć tražiocima Azila];

Slovakia: Human Rights League (Liga za ľudské práva)

Spain: RESCATE

Switzerland: Country Information Research Centre (CIREC); Schweizerische Flüchtlingshilfe (SFH)

United Kingdom: Asylos; Asylum Aid; Asylum Research Consultancy (ARC); Freedom from Torture

Ukraine: Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society (HIAS Kyiv); Kharkiv Regional Charitable Foundation; International Fund for Health and Environment Protection 'Region Karpat' (NEEKA)

A full list of the NGO respondents together with their contact details can be found in [Annex A](#). For ease of reference, the organisations will be referred to by their full name in English throughout this report. If you feel we have missed an organisation or initiative or would like to get in touch about your own COI research or have any other comments, please contact ARC at: info@asylumresearchconsultancy.com.

Acronyms

ACCORD	Austrian Centre for Country of Origin and Asylum Research and Documentation
APC	Asylum Protection Centre
ARC	Asylum Research Consultancy
BAMF	Bundesamt für Migration und Flüchtlinge (Germany)
CIREC	Country Information Research Centre
CNRR	Romanian National Council for Refugees
COI	Country of Origin Information
COIS	Country of Origin Information Service (United Kingdom)
DCR	Dutch Council for Refugees
DRC	Danish Refugee Council
EAC	European Asylum Curriculum
ECRE	European Council on Refugees and Exiles
ECtHR	European Court of Human Rights
ERF	European Refugee Fund
FFM	Fact-Finding Mission
HFHR	Helsinki Foundation for Human Rights
HIAS	Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society
IAGCI	Independent Advisory Group on Country Information (United Kingdom)
IND	Immigration and Naturalisation Service (The Netherlands)
NEEKA	International Fund for Health and Environment Protection 'Region Karpat'
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
NOAS	Norwegian Organization for Asylum Seekers in Norway
OFPRAS	Office Français de Protection des Réfugiés et Apatrides (France)
OGN	Operational Guidance Note
OIN	Office for Immigration and Nationality (Hungary)
ORAC	Office of the Refugee Application Commissioner (Ireland)
RAT	Refugee Appeals Tribunal (Ireland)
RDC	Refugee Documentation Centre (Ireland)
RIU	Research and Information Unit (Ireland)
RLS	Refugee Legal Service (Ireland)
RSD	Refugee Status Determination
RSDP	Refugee Status Determination Procedure
SFH	Schweizerische Flüchtlingshilfe (Switzerland)
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees

Summary

23 organisations participated in this mapping exercise. This section summarises the structure, focus and outputs, case-specific research services and general working practices of these organisations. Full responses to the questionnaire are presented in [Annex B](#).

Structure

Staff

Most of the organisations that took part in this mapping exercise do not have a unit working solely on Country of Origin Information (COI), but include COI as part of their legal aid, research or policy efforts. Of the 23 organisations that completed the questionnaire, 14 organisations have dedicated staff working either part or full-time on COI ranging from 71 volunteers in one organisation (Asylos – Belgium/France/Greece/UK) to 10 (full time equivalent) paid staff (Austrian Centre for Country of Origin and Asylum (ACCORD)). Four organisations have one or more staff members working to some extent on COI related issues, one organisation (Asylum Aid – UK) only does limited policy work on COI, whilst another (Forum Réfugiés –COSI - France) reported that a “COI group is being gradually set up within the organisation”. Three respondents are legal organisations that employ legal representatives who conduct COI research as part of their case management.

Organisations are staffed by various combinations of an Administration Officer, Assistant Director, Clerical Officer, COI Consultants, Senior COI Consultant, COI Researchers, COI Training Officer, Content Managers, Country Analyst, Desk Researcher, Ecoi.net Coordinator, Executive Officer, Head of Department, High Executive Officer, International Protection Policy Coordinator, Interns, Law Clerk, Lawyers, Legal Assistants, Legal Consultant, Legal Counsellor, Legal Officers, Librarian, Policy & Research Manager, Politicologist, Program Coordinator, Project Manager, Research Consultants, Researcher, Trainee, Volunteer Coordinators, and Volunteers. Of the 20 organisations that provided specific information on their staff, the number of paid staff working on COI issues is between 1-10. Asylos (Belgium/France/Greece/UK) is unique in that it has 60 volunteers in addition to 11 volunteer coordinators.

Funding

With regards to funding, of the 17 organisations that directly answered the question², 9 organisations were solely dependent on one source of income for their COI work, six organisations financed their COI work through a range of sources, whilst two organisations indicated that they received no funding at all for their COI work (no further details provided):

- 6 organisations receive funding to do COI work from a range of funders including universities, foundations, NGOs, the government, fees paid by law firms and individual lawyers;
- 4 organisations receive funding from the European Refugee Fund (ERF);
- 4 organisations receive government funding;
- 4 organisations are funded through fees paid by law firms, who in turn are privately funded by clients or are funded by legal aid;

² For four organisations this question was not applicable and two organisations did not provide an answer.

- 3 organisations fund their COI work over a single or a range of project lines their organisation is involved in;
- 3 organisations receive funding from private donors;
- 2 organisations have their COI research co-funded by UNHCR.

Training received

Of the 23 organisations that responded to the questionnaire, the staff of 17 organisations have received some form of specific COI training:

- The staff of 14 organisations have completed ACCORD's European Asylum Curriculum (EAC) COI Module for Blending Learning Courses, or the pre 2009 Blended Learning Course "Researching Country of Origin Information" training. Relevant staff members of four of these organisations have also attended other COI specific training, whereby staff members from the Legal Aid Board (Ireland) have all completed the EAC COI Module online course and four have become EAC accredited COI trainers. ACCORD has three EAC accredited COI trainers. There are two more EAC accredited COI trainers working for non-governmental organisations who provide training in cooperation with ACCORD.
- The relevant staff members of both Asylum Research Consultancy (UK) and Freedom from Torture (UK) have all completed the pre 2009 ACCORD training and received internal COI training when they were employed as COI researchers in another organisation. New staff at the Dutch Council for Refugees (DCR) receive also in addition internal training based on DCR's own training manual/guidelines.

Out of 14 organisations that have dedicated staff working on COI, staff members of 13 organisations have received some form of COI specialised training either through ACCORD's training courses, internally or through other external means. The German Informationsverbund Asyl & Migration, who did not as such complete the ACCORD training, participated in the development of the training manual in 2004 and e-learning tool in 2007.

Focus and outputs

Outputs

22 organisations directly answered the question on what kind of COI end-product they produce (this does not include the provision of COI-related training courses):

- **Country reports (11):** Asylum Protection Centre (APC) (Serbia), Austrian Centre for Country of Origin and Asylum (ACCORD), Danish Refugee Council (DRC), Dutch Council for Refugees (DCR), Flemish Refugee Action (Belgium), Forum Réfugiés-COSI (France), Helsinki Foundation for Human Rights (HFHR) (Poland), Human Rights League (Slovakia), Legal Aid Board (Ireland), Romanian National Council for Refugees (CNRR), Schweizerische Flüchtlingshilfe (SFH) – (Switzerland)
- **Case-specific research (9):** Asylus (Belgium/France/Greece/UK), Asylum Protection Centre (APC) (Serbia), Asylum Research Consultancy (ARC) (UK), Country Information Research Centre (CIREC)

- (Switzerland), Danish Refugee Council (DRC), Helsinki Foundation for Human Rights (HFHR) (Poland), Kharkiv Regional Charitable Foundation “Social service of assistance”-UNHCR IP (Ukraine), RESCATE (Spain), Schweizerische Flüchtlingshilfe (SFH) (Switzerland)
- **Query responses (6):** Asylum Protection Centre (APC) (Serbia), Austrian Centre for Country of Origin and Asylum (ACCORD), Country Information Research Centre (CIREC) (Switzerland), Dutch Council for Refugees (DCR), Hungarian Helsinki Committee, Romanian National Council for Refugees (CNRR) – Romania, Schweizerische Flüchtlingshilfe (SFH) (Switzerland)
 - **Thematic research (5):** Asylum Research Consultancy (ARC) (UK), Austrian Centre for Country of Origin and Asylum (ACCORD), Dutch Council for Refugees (DCR), Helsinki Foundation for Human Rights (HFHR) (Poland), Schweizerische Flüchtlingshilfe (SFH) (Switzerland)
 - **Summaries of COI reports (5):** Asylum Protection Centre (APC) (Serbia), Dutch Council for Refugees (DCR): “Summaries of Ambtsberichten (country reports published by the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs)”, Helsinki Foundation for Human Rights (HFHR) (Poland), Legal Aid Board (Ireland), Schweizerische Flüchtlingshilfe (SFH) (Switzerland)
 - **Research and analysis on asylum process (4):** Asylum Aid (UK) “policy and research work on COI and women”, Asylum Research Consultancy (ARC) (UK) “We are also involved in a project with the Still Human Still Here Coalition to review the country information and case law content of a number of Operational Guidance Notes (OGNs), which are country specific ‘policy’ documents that give guidance to UKBA decision makers on how to assess asylum claims”, Hungarian Helsinki Committee “Research on the use of COI by the judiciary in the EU, please see [Country Information in Asylum Procedures – Quality as a Legal Requirement in the EU](#) and [Structural differences and access to country information \(COI\) at European courts dealing with asylum](#)”, Kharkiv Regional Charitable Foundation “Social service of assistance”-UNHCR IP (Ukraine)
 - **Newsletters (2):** Asylum Research Consultancy (ARC) (UK), Forum Réfugiés-COSI (France)
 - **COI Portal www.ecoi.net (2):** Austrian Centre for Country of Origin and Asylum (ACCORD), Informationsverbund Asyl & Migration (Germany)
 - **Government consultation (2):** Asylum Aid (UK), Kharkiv Regional Charitable Foundation “Social service of assistance”-UNHCR IP (Ukraine)
 - **Policy briefings (2):** Asylum Aid (UK), Schweizerische Flüchtlingshilfe (SFH) (Switzerland)
 - **Fact-finding mission reports (1):** Norwegian Organization for Asylum Seekers (NOAS)
 - **Medico-Legal-Country reports (1):** Freedom from Torture (UK) “Research is conducted using aggregated data from Freedom From Torture’s forensic medico-legal reports on the incidence and patterns of torture in particular countries of origin of Freedom from Torture clients”
 - **COI Seminars and related reports (1):** Austrian Centre for Country of Origin and Asylum (ACCORD): “international experts inform about a selected topic, all targets groups are invited to submit questions; reports based on COI seminars”
 - **Other:**
 - Informationsverbund Asyl & Migration (Germany): “Occasional publications on COI issues (usually as part of our publication “ASYLMAGAZIN”)
 - Legal Aid Board (Ireland): “RDC Country Information Packs (reference documents highlighting key sources under specific subject areas). Country Marriage and Adoption Packs (longer form queries on these specific issues e.g. marriage legislation/procedures in countries of origin). The RDC also produces a twice yearly publication ‘The Researcher’ which contains COI related articles from external contributors and RDC staff. Library bulletins highlighting new acquisitions and resources are also produced 3 times per year. Case summaries are sometimes prepared”

For a list of relevant publications with hyperlinks please consult [Annex B](#), Q. 9.

Involvement in fact-finding missions

With regards to being involved in fact-finding missions, of the 22 organisations that directly answered the question, 16 organisations have not been involved in a fact-finding mission. The remaining six have conducted one to several missions each to a range of countries researching specific or numerous issues as illustrated in the table below:

Organisation	Country visited and Year	Issues covered	Additional information
Asylum Protection Centre (APC) – Serbia	Macedonia (March 2012)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ General reception conditions ○ Absence of interpreters in the procedures ○ Number of protections granted ○ Integration ○ Procedural violations in the asylum procedure ○ Smuggling and trafficking of irregular migrants ○ Migration routes over Macedonia ○ Inter-state cooperation with Serbia on the issues of migrants 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Undertaken with the Red Cross of Macedonia ○ Report not publicly available
Danish Refugee Council (DRC) – Denmark	2012: Russia and Iran 2013: Northern Iraq and Uganda	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Russia: Possibility of Chechens to settle in the Russian Federation outside of Chechnya ○ Iran: Situation of Kurds ○ Northern Iraq: Situation of Iranian Kurds ○ Uganda: Situation for LGBT persons 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Joint fact-finding missions with the Danish Immigration Service ○ Reports available online at the Danish Immigration Service and Danish Refugee Council
Forum Réfugiés - COSI - France	November 2011: Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) October 2012: Armenia April 2013: Albania	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Albania: violence against women, situation of Roma persons, issues related to vendetta ○ Armenia: governance, freedom of the press, violence against women, discriminations against minorities ○ DRC: Members of the Association Forum Réfugiés - COSI have attended the Election Observation Mission in the Democratic Republic of Congo in November 2011 for EURAC 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Reports are not publicly available
Hungarian Helsinki Committee – Hungary	June 2011 and April 2012: Serbia	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The functionality of the Serbian asylum system 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Both reports are publicly available: June 2011 and April 2012

Norwegian Organization for Asylum Seekers (NOAS) - Norway	One to two fact-finding missions each year	○ Focus is mainly on the political and security situation	○ Reports are publicly available
Schweizerische Flüchtlingshilfe (SFH) - Switzerland	Carried out irregularly and not always joint missions with other NGOs. September 2012: Sri Lanka 2011: Kosovo (with the support of the Society for Threatened People)	[Not specified]	○ NGO fact finding mission ○ Reports are publicly available

Contact with immigration board/services

In relation to whether those working on COI are in regular contact with the national immigration board/services, out of the 22 organisations that directly answered the question, five organisations (Asylos (Belgium/France/Greece/UK), Country Information Research Centre (CIREC) (Switzerland), Flemish Refugee Action (Belgium), Helsinki Foundation for Human Rights (HFHR) (Poland), and Legal Aid Board (Ireland)) are not in contact with the relevant government authorities.

One organisation, Asylum Research Consultancy (ARC) (UK), is indirectly in contact by engaging “with the UKBA Country of Origin Information Service (COIS) teams via other forums e.g. at meetings of the Independent Advisory Group on Country Information (IAGCI) and other externally organised meetings”, whilst the remaining 16 organisations are all in contact with the immigration board/services.

Out of these 16, two responded that they engaged with the authorities in relation to specific cases and also to discuss more general COI issues (Danish Refugee Council (DRC) and Kharkiv Regional Charitable Foundation “Social service of assistance”-UNHCR IP (Ukraine)), whilst four organisations were only in contact with the immigration board/services to discuss specific cases (Asylum Protection Centre (APC) (Serbia), Human Rights League (Slovakia), the International Fund for Health and Environment Protection ‘Region Karpat’ (NEEKA) (Ukraine) and RESCATE (Spain).

Case Specific Research/query responses

Out of the 23 respondees, all but three conduct case-specific COI research or produce query responses, these are: Asylum Aid (UK), Freedom from Torture (UK) and Informationsverbund Asyl & Migration (Germany). Across the 20 organisations conducting case specific research, the number of requests addressed per month varies widely; from around 1 per month up to 150 per month:

Range	Number of Organisations (out of 20)	Organisations
<5	5	Asylum Protection Centre (APC) (Serbia); Asylum Research Consultancy (ARC) (UK); Helsinki Foundation for Human Rights (HFHR) (Poland); Human Rights League (Slovakia); Norwegian Organization for Asylum Seekers (NOAS) (rarely).
5-10	5	Country Information Research Centre (CIREC) (Switzerland); Forum Réfugiés-COSI (France); Hungarian Helsinki Committee; RESCATE (Spain); Asylos (Belgium/France/Greece/UK) (85 in total since 2010)
11-20	2	Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society (HIAS) (Ukraine); Kharkiv Regional Charitable Foundation "Social service of assistance"-UNHCR IP (Ukraine)
21-30	3	International Fund for Health and Environment Protection 'Region Karpat' (NEEKA) (Ukraine) (10-30/month); Romanian National Council for Refugees (CNRR); Schweizerische Flüchtlingshilfe (SFH) (Switzerland)
31-40	2	Austrian Centre for Country of Origin and Asylum (ACCORD); Flemish Refugee Action (Belgium)
>120	3	Danish Refugee Council (DRC); Dutch Council for Refugees (DCR); Legal Aid Board (Ireland).

Jurisdiction

Of the 20 organisations providing a case-specific research service, 13 undertake COI research for both national and EU level jurisdiction; five focus only on national jurisdiction and two did not directly answer the question.

With regards to the three organisations working on COI-related issues who do not offer a case-specific research service, one undertakes research at the national jurisdiction level, and the other two at both national and EU level jurisdiction.

With regards to the level of decision making for which COI research is provided, 15 of 20 work at both the government level (administrative/first instance) and appeal stage, two focus on providing COI research at the appeal stage, one focuses at the government level, one responded at the 'regional level' and one did not answer the question.

Clients

The clients of the case-specific research services/ query responses are³:

- **Legal representatives of asylum seekers (may also be NGOs) (11):** Asylös (Belgium/France/Greece/UK); Asylum Research Consultancy (ARC) (UK); Austrian Centre for Country of Origin and Asylum (ACCORD); Country Information Research Centre (CIREC) (Switzerland); Dutch Council for Refugees (DCR); Flemish Refugee Action (Belgium); Forum Réfugiés-COSI (France); Hungarian Helsinki Committee; Legal Aid Board (Ireland); Romanian National Council for Refugees (CNRR); Schweizerische Flüchtlingshilfe (SFH) (Switzerland);
- **Asylum Seekers (10):** Danish Refugee Council (DRC); Flemish Refugee Action (Belgium); Forum Réfugiés-COSI (France); Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society (HIAS) (Ukraine); Helsinki Foundation for Human Rights (HFHR) (Poland); Human Rights League (Slovakia); International Fund for Health and Environment Protection 'Region Karpat' (NEEKA) (Ukraine); Kharkiv Regional Charitable Foundation "Social service of assistance"-UNHCR IP (Ukraine); Norwegian Organization for Asylum Seekers (NOAS) (Norway); RESCATE (Spain);
- **Judges (4):** Austrian Centre for Country of Origin and Asylum (ACCORD); Forum Réfugiés-COSI (France); Legal Aid Board (Ireland); Romanian National Council for Refugees (CNRR);
- **Government agencies (3):** Asylum Protection Centre (APC) (Serbia); Austrian Centre for Country of Origin and Asylum (ACCORD); Legal Aid Board (Ireland);
- **Social workers (2):** Flemish Refugee Action (Belgium); Forum Réfugiés-COSI (France);
- **NGOs (1):** Asylum Protection Centre (APC) (Serbia);

Nature of enquires

With regards to the types of case-specific enquiries and query responses, of the 18 organisations that specifically answered the question, respondents emphasised that the issues vary depending on the individual case, relating to the treatment of specific profiles coming under Refugee Convention grounds, effective protection and possibility of internal relocation, as well as subsidiary protection (e.g. indiscriminate violence, availability of medical treatment) and the situation if returned to another Member State under the Dublin Regulation. Respondents also mentioned being instructed to corroborate an applicant's testimony e.g. researching specific events or places. One organisation mentioned being asked to evaluate available COI sources.

Turnaround time

The organisations offer a wide range for the turnaround time for completing the research, which also can greatly vary depending on the case, from between a few hours, up to several months.

Instructions

Two organisations both formulate the issues for research and undertake the research (Kharkiv Regional Charitable Foundation "Social service of assistance" UNHCR IP (Ukraine) and RESCATE (Spain)). 17 respondents gave specific information on how COI requests are received. Organisations may receive requests in a number of ways, mainly by email (17), also by phone (9), fax (3), face-to face meetings (2), by people visiting the organisation in person (2), post (1), e-library system (1), through the organisation's website (1) and through counselling activities (1).

³ N.B. The respondents may not have answered this question consistently; some for example may have understood the question to relate to who the research is ultimately provided for, others with regards to who they are instructed by to conduct the research.

19 organisations detailed whether they received accompanying documents together with case specific COI queries. Five do not. Of the other 14 organisations, two did not specify what these documents might be. For the 12 organisations that did, requests may be sent with accompanying documents, depending on the specific case, including:

- **(Parts of) the legal case file e.g. witness statement, refusal letter, determination, COI originally submitted at first instance (8):** Asylum Research Consultancy (ARC) (UK); Country Information Research Centre (CIREC) (Switzerland); Danish Refugee Council (DRC); Flemish Refugee Action (Belgium); Helsinki Foundation for Human Rights (HFHR) (Poland); Hungarian Helsinki Committee; Romanian National Council for Refugees (CNRR); Schweizerische Flüchtlingshilfe (SFH) (Switzerland);
- **Documents provided by the asylum seeker (5):** Asylos (Belgium/France/Greece/UK); Country Information Research Centre (CIREC) (Switzerland); Danish Refugee Council (DRC); International Fund for Health and Environment Protection 'Region Karpat' (NEEKA) (Ukraine); Kharkiv Regional Charitable Foundation "Social service of assistance"-UNHCR IP (Ukraine)
- **General background information (2):** Asylos (Belgium/France/Greece/UK); Austrian Centre for Country of Origin and Asylum (ACCORD);
- **Medical certificates (3):** Country Information Research Centre (CIREC) (Switzerland); Danish Refugee Council (DRC); Schweizerische Flüchtlingshilfe (SFH) (Switzerland).

Working practices

Languages

Research services are provided by the 23 organisations in the following languages⁴:

- **Amharic (1):** Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society (HIAS) (Ukraine)
- **Arabic (1):** Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society (HIAS) (Ukraine)
- **Bengali (1):** Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society (HIAS) (Ukraine)
- **Czech (1):** Hungarian Helsinki Committee [particular publication]
- **Danish (1):** Danish Refugee Council (DRC)
- **Dutch (2):** Dutch Council for Refugees (DCR); Flemish Refugee Action (Belgium)
- **English (16):** Asylos (Belgium/France/Greece/UK); Asylum Aid (UK); Asylum Research Consultancy (ARC) (UK); Austrian Centre for Country of Origin and Asylum (ACCORD); Danish Refugee Council (DRC) [FFMs, Query responses and complaints to international bodies]; Dutch Council for Refugees (DCR) [rarely]; Flemish Refugee Action (Belgium); Freedom from Torture (UK); Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society (HIAS) (Ukraine); Human Rights League (Slovakia); Hungarian Helsinki Committee; Informationsverbund Asyl & Migration (Germany); International Fund for Health and Environment Protection 'Region Karpat' (NEEKA) (Ukraine); Kharkiv Regional Charitable Foundation "Social service of assistance"-UNHCR IP (Ukraine); Legal Aid Board (Ireland); Norwegian Organization for Asylum Seekers (NOAS) (Norway)
- **French (8):** Asylos (Belgium/France/Greece/UK); Austrian Centre for Country of Origin and Asylum (ACCORD); Country Information Research Centre (CIREC) (Switzerland); Flemish Refugee Action (Belgium); Forum Réfugiés-COSI (France); Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society (HIAS) (Ukraine); Hungarian Helsinki Committee; Schweizerische Flüchtlingshilfe (SFH) (Switzerland)
- **Farsi:** Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society (HIAS) (Ukraine)
- **German (5):** Austrian Centre for Country of Origin and Asylum (ACCORD); Flemish Refugee Action (Belgium); Hungarian Helsinki Committee; Informationsverbund Asyl & Migration (Germany); Schweizerische Flüchtlingshilfe (SFH) (Switzerland)
- **Hindi (1):** Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society (HIAS) (Ukraine)
- **Hungarian (1):** Hungarian Helsinki Committee (particular publication)
- **Italian (1):** Hungarian Helsinki Committee (particular publication)
- **Lingala (1):** Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society (HIAS) (Ukraine)
- **Norwegian (1):** Norwegian Organization for Asylum Seekers (NOAS) (Norway)
- **Pashto (1):** Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society (HIAS) (Ukraine)
- **Polish (1):** Helsinki Foundation for Human Rights (HFHR) (Poland)
- **Romanian (1):** Romanian National Council for Refugees (CNRR)
- **Russian (5):** Austrian Centre for Country of Origin and Asylum (ACCORD); Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society (HIAS) (Ukraine); Hungarian Helsinki Committee [particular publication]; International Fund for Health and Environment Protection 'Region Karpat' (NEEKA) (Ukraine); Kharkiv Regional Charitable Foundation "Social service of assistance"-UNHCR IP (Ukraine)
- **Serbian (1):** Asylum Protection Centre (APC) (Serbia)
- **Slovak (1):** Human Rights League (Slovakia)
- **Somali (1):** Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society (HIAS) (Ukraine)

⁴ It appears that this question may not have been answered uniformly; some organisations may have provided information on the languages they conduct research in, not the languages they provide services in.

- **Spanish (3):** Austrian Centre for Country of Origin and Asylum (ACCORD); Hungarian Helsinki Committee [particular publication]; RESCATE (Spain)
- **Ukrainian (2):** International Fund for Health and Environment Protection 'Region Karpat' (NEEKA) (Ukraine); Kharkiv Regional Charitable Foundation "Social service of assistance"-UNHCR IP (Ukraine)

Translations

Of the 20 organisations undertaking case-specific COI research, four organisations do not translate information found and use sources only in their original language (Asylum Research Consultancy (ARC) (UK); Dutch Council for Refugees (DCR); Flemish Refugee Action (Belgium); Legal Aid Board (Ireland)). The remaining 16 organisations all translate in-house. Of these, one has a certified translator as a staff member (Romanian National Council for Refugees (CNRR)), three others may use professional translators if they are able to secure funding (Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society (HIAS) (Ukraine); Human Rights League (Slovakia); Schweizerische Flüchtlingshilfe (SFH) (Switzerland)), and the Austrian Centre for Country of Origin and Asylum (ACCORD) may ask colleagues from the Austrian Red Cross to help with translating languages such as Farsi, Dari or Turkish.

Referencing sources consulted

With regards to whether organisations include a full list of all sources consulted in the course of undertaking case specific COI research, of those 14 organisations that specifically answered the question, four organisations do not provide a list of all sources consulted (Asylum Research Consultancy (ARC) (UK); Country Information Research Centre (CIREC) (Switzerland); Kharkiv Regional Charitable Foundation "Social service of assistance"-UNHCR IP (Ukraine) and Schweizerische Flüchtlingshilfe (SFH) (Switzerland). Nine of 14 respondents provide a full list of sources consulted (Asylos (Belgium/France/Greece/UK); Asylum Protection Centre (APC) (Serbia); Dutch Council for Refugees (DCR); Danish Refugee Council (DRC) [in FFMs sources may be kept confidential]; Helsinki Foundation for Human Rights (HFHR) (Poland); Legal Aid Board (Ireland); Norwegian Organization for Asylum Seekers (NOAS) (Norway) [except anonymous sources]; RESCATE (Spain); and Romanian National Council for Refugees (CNRR)). One organisation, the Austrian Centre for Country of Origin and Asylum (ACCORD), provides a list of sources consulted along with the relevant search terms if no information on a specific issue is found.

Use of experts

Of 22 organisations for whom it was relevant to answer the question whether their organisation consults experts or locally based NGOs in the course of their COI related work, four stated that they did not: Flemish Refugee Action (Belgium); Helsinki Foundation for Human Rights (HFHR) (Poland); Hungarian Helsinki Committee; Romanian National Council for Refugees (CNRR), the latter of whom commented that they had not yet done so, but would not rule out doing so in the future. One organisation (RESCATE (Spain)) responded that it mostly uses information which is publicly available. Four organisations stated that they very rarely or occasionally consulted experts: Asylum Protection Centre (APC) (Serbia); Asylum Research Consultancy (ARC) (UK); Dutch Council for Refugees (DCR); Legal Aid Board (Ireland); The remaining 13 organisations consulted a range of experts such as: academics, embassy contacts, journalists, local NGOs, partners/network members, members of international organisations or other researchers.

Publicly available COI related research

Case specific COI research

Of the 20 organisations that undertake case-specific COI research, 18 provided information on whether they make these reports publically available. 10 out of 18 organisations do not publish these reports, or do not routinely publish these (Asylos (Belgium/France/Greece/UK); Asylum Protection Centre (APC) (Serbia); Asylum Research Consultancy (ARC) (UK); Dutch Council for Refugees (DCR); Flemish Refugee Action (Belgium); Forum Réfugiés-COSI (France); Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society (HIAS) (Ukraine); Helsinki Foundation for Human Rights (HFHR) (Poland); Hungarian Helsinki Committee; Kharkiv Regional Charitable Foundation Social service of assistance"-UNHCR IP (Ukraine)). For one organisation this is because they contain personal client information (Asylum Research Consultancy (ARC) (UK).

Five other organisations make their case-specific queries publicly available but remove personal information before publication (Austrian Centre for Country of Origin and Asylum (ACCORD); Country Information Research Centre (CIREC) (Switzerland), Danish Refugee Council (DRC); Romanian National Council for Refugees (CNRR); Legal Aid Board (Ireland)). Three organisations make all their products publicly available, including case specific research (Human Rights League (Slovakia); Norwegian Organization for Asylum Seekers (NOAS) (Norway); Schweizerische Flüchtlingshilfe (SFH) (Switzerland)).

Other COI products

With regards to other COI-related publications, all organisations that addressed this point state that they make their reports available on their respective websites (Asylum Aid (UK); Asylum Protection Centre (APC) (Serbia); Asylum Research Consultancy (ARC) (UK); Austrian Centre for Country of Origin and Asylum (ACCORD); Country Information Research Centre (CIREC) (Switzerland); Dutch Council for Refugees (DCR); Danish Refugee Council (DRC); Forum Réfugiés-COSI (France); Freedom from Torture (UK); Human Rights League (Slovakia); Hungarian Helsinki Committee; Informationsverbund Asyl & Migration (Germany); Legal Aid Board (Ireland); Norwegian Organization for Asylum Seekers (NOAS) (Norway); Romanian National Council for Refugees (CNRR); Schweizerische Flüchtlingshilfe (SFH) (Switzerland)).

Databases

Of the 20 organisations that directly answered the question, 12 have databases of their COI-related products. Five of these operate public databases (Asylum Protection Centre (APC) (Serbia); Austrian Centre for Country of Origin and Asylum (ACCORD); Human Rights League (Slovakia); Romanian National Council for Refugees (CNRR); Schweizerische Flüchtlingshilfe (SFH) (Switzerland)). One operates a subscription only database (Dutch Council for Refugees (DCR)), one operates a database shared with UNHCR and other NGOs on request (Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society (HIAS) (Ukraine)) and one operates a database on the Ritimo Network website (Forum Réfugiés-COSI (France)). Four organisations have an internal database (Asylos (Belgium/France/Greece/UK); Asylum Research Consultancy (ARC) (UK); Helsinki Foundation for Human Rights (HFHR) (Poland); Legal Aid Board (Ireland)).

8 organisations do not operate a database. Four of these specifically mentioned that they make their reports available on their website (Country Information Research Centre (CIREC) (Switzerland); Danish Refugee Council (DRC); Freedom from Torture (UK); Norwegian Organization for Asylum Seekers (NOAS) (Norway)) and one lists selected COI on its homepage (Informationsverbund Asyl & Migration (Germany)).

E-Forum of COI-researchers

Of the 23 organisations that responded to the questionnaire, 22 confirmed their interest in joining an e-forum of COI-researchers. The Informationsverbund Asyl & Migration (Germany) was the only organisation which did not want to join such a forum as it does not undertake COI research and felt it was therefore not in a position to be able to fully contribute.

ANNEX A ORGANISATIONS AND CONTACT DETAILS

Organisation	Country	Contact person	Contact details
Asylos	Belgium/France/ Greece/United Kingdom	Ellen Riotte	T: +32 491646138 E: ellen.riotte@asylos.eu ; info@asylos.eu W: www.asylos.eu
Asylum Aid	United Kingdom	Debora Singer	T: +44 20 7354 9631 extension 208 E: deboras@asylumaid.org.uk W: www.asylumaid.org.uk
Asylum Protection Centre (APC)	Serbia	Rados Djurovic	T: +381 63 7047080; +381 11 2457376 E: rados.djurovic@apc-cza.org W: www.apc-cza.org
Asylum Research Consultancy (ARC)	United Kingdom	Liz Williams	T: +44 7919 388966 E: info@asylumresearchconsultancy.com W: www.asylumresearchconsultancy.com
Austrian Red Cross: Austrian Centre for Country of Origin and Asylum Research and Documentation (ACCORD)	Austria	Andrea Jakober	T: +43 1 58900 581 E: andrea.jakober@redcross.at W: http://accord.redcross.at
Country Information Research Centre (CIREC)	Switzerland	Stéphanie Cornioley	T: +41 783 014 938 E: stephanie.cornioley@cirec.ch ; info@cirec.ch W: www.cirec.ch
Danish Refugee Council (DRC)	Denmark	Eva Singer	T: +45 3373 5000 E: eva.singer@drc.dk W: www.drc.dk
Dutch Council for Refugees (DCR)	The Netherlands	Hiske van den Bergh	T: + 31 20 3467200 ; +31 20 3467274 E: hvandenbergh@vluchtelingenwerk.nl W: www.vluchtelingenwerk.nl
Flemish Refugee Action	Belgium	Charlotte Vandycke	T: +32 2 225 00 17 E: planetsearch@vluchtelingenwerk.be W: www.vluchtelingenwerk.be

Organisation	Country	Contact person	Contact details
Forum Réfugiés - COSI	France	Delphine Grandcolas	T: +33 04 27 82 62 64 E: documentation@forumrefugies.org W: www.forumrefugies.org
Freedom from Torture	United Kingdom	Jo Pettitt	T: +44 20 7697 7803 E: jpettitt@freedomfromtorture.org W: www.freedomfromtorture.org
Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society (HIAS)	Ukraine	Aleksandr Galkin	T: +380 44 453 1653 E: a.galkin@hias.kiev.ua W: http://global.hias.org/en/pages/kyiv
Helsinki Foundation for Human Rights (HFHR)	Poland	Maciej Fagasinski	T: +48 22 556 44 66 E: m.fagasinski@hfhrpol.waw.pl W: www.hfhr.pl
Human Rights League	Slovakia	Zuzana Številová, Katarína Fajnorová,	E: stevulova@hrl.sk ; fajnorova@hrl.sk W: http://www.hrl.sk/en
Hungarian Helsinki Committee	Hungary	Tudor Rosu	T: +36 1 321 4323 E: tudor.rosu@helsinki.hu W: http://helsinki.hu/en/
Informationsverbund Asyl & Migration	Germany	Michael Kalkmann	T: +49 30 46793010 E: mk@asyl.net W: www.asyl.net
International Fund for Health and Environment Protection 'Region Karpat' (NEEKA)	Ukraine	Roman Ugrin	T: +380 57 75 67 516 E: info@neeka.org , roman.ugrin@neeka.org W: http://neeka.org/
Kharkiv Regional Charitable Foundation "Social service of assistance" (UNHCR IP)	Ukraine	Victor Gritsay	T: +380 57 75 67 516
Legal Aid Board	Ireland	Niall Maher	T: +353 1 4776264 E: niallmaher@legalaiddboard.ie W: www.legalaiddboard.ie

Organisation	Country	Contact person	Contact details
Norwegian Organization for Asylum Seekers (NOAS)	Norway	Jon Ole Martinsen	T: +47 22 36 56 60 M: +47 404 93 689 E: jon.ole.martinsen@noas.org W: www.noas.org
RESCATE	Spain	Berta Muñoz Aljaro Aurora Gonzalez Conde	T: +34 91 447 28 72 E: berta.munoz@ongrescate.org ; aurora.conde@ongrescate.org W: www.ongrescate.org
Romanian National Council for Refugees (CNRR)	Romania	Alin Morariu	T: +40 21 312 62 10 E: morariu@cnrr.ro W: www.cnrr.ro
Schweizerische Flüchtlingshilfe (SFH)	Switzerland	Alexandra Geiser Adrian Schuster	T: +41 31 370 75 75 E: Adrian.Schuster@osar.ch ; Alexandra.Geiser@osar.ch W: www.osar.ch

ANNEX B RESPONSES TO QUESTIONNAIRE

Questions:

1. How many people are working on COI in your organisation? Please also specify their position?
2. Have those engaged in COI research completed ACCORD's training? If yes, how many and when? If not, have they attended any other COI specific training relevant for their work?
3. If applicable, how is your COI department funded?
4. Does the COI department/ do those working on COI focus on national jurisdiction, jurisdiction at the EU level or both?
5. Do you provide COI research at government level decision making stage and/or appeal level?
6. Is the COI department/ are those working on COI in regular contact with the national immigration board/ services? Please specify how often and in what capacity.
7. Has your COI department/ have those working on COI been involved in State/ NGO fact finding missions?
8. What kind of COI research end-products does your organisation produce? Research and analysis on asylum process, query responses, summaries of reports, case-specific reports, thematic and/or country reports, involvement in government consultations, policy briefings etc.? Please specify.
9. Are the COI research end-products publicly available? Please specify.
10. In which language(s) do you provide services?
11. Do you translate information you collect for your COI research yourself or do you engage a professional translation service?
12. How is COI material referenced? Is a full list of the sources consulted in undertaking the COI research provided?
13. Does the COI department/ do those working on COI consult experts or local country based NGOs on certain topics/ themes/ countries? Please specify.
14. Does your organisation have a database where reports are gathered and can be accessed? If so, is this database open to public? Please specify.
15. Does your department/ do those working on COI do case-specific research? Please specify.
16. How many of these queries (on average) does your organisation produce per month?
17. What is the nature of the queries?
18. Who are your main clients?
19. How do you receive the questions? Email? Phone? Please specify.
20. Do you get any accompanying documents? E.g. witness statement, refusal letter, determination? Please specify.
21. What is your standard turnaround time for case specific research?
22. Would your organisation be interested in becoming part of an e-forum of COI-researchers (only NGO or independent units) that would serve as an information exchange platform? If so, who would be your main contact person in the preparation to establish such a platform?

The following question included in the original questionnaire was deleted due to its ambiguity:

Do you have any paid subscriptions?

1. How many people are working on COI in your organisation? Please also specify their position

Asylos - Belgium/France/Greece/United Kingdom	As of September 2013, 60 volunteers who commit two hours per week to researching COI; 11 volunteer coordinators of which five have general coordination tasks and six manage research teams: CIS (Eastern Europe, Russia, Caucasus and Central Asia), Balkans, Asia, Afghanistan, Africa, and MENA.
Asylum Aid - United Kingdom	1 Policy and Research Manager 1 International Protection Policy Coordinator limited policy work on COI
Asylum Protection Centre (APC) – Serbia	3 persons are working on COI research (1 politicologist and 2 legal officers)
Asylum Research Consultancy (ARC) – United Kingdom	2 Research Consultants
Austrian Centre for Country of Origin and Asylum (ACCORD) - Austria	6 Content Managers ecoinet (part-time), 1 ecoinet Coordinator (full-time); 4 COI Researchers (3 full-time, 1 part-time; 1 COI Training Officer (part-time); 1 head of department (part time) 1 administration officer (part time) (equivalent to 10 full time paid staff)
Country Information Research Centre (CIREC) - Switzerland	1 person is working on COI as a Country Analyst
Danish Refugee Council (DRC) - Denmark	10 Legal Consultants (part of the asylum department, only work to some extent on COI material)
Dutch Council for Refugees (DCR) – The Netherlands	3-4 paid COI Consultants, including 1 Senior COI Consultant, 6 – 7 Interns. Additionally, we have 4 paid COI researchers on location in the reception centres where the first instance decision-making takes place, providing COI-research to lawyers directly on demand.
Flemish Refugee Action - Belgium	2 Desk Researchers
Forum Réfugiés-COSI - France	A COI Group is being gradually set up in Forum Réfugiés-COSI.
Freedom from Torture - United Kingdom	No COI department– 1 Researcher working on (among other things) country reports documenting patterns of torture based on aggregated data from Freedom from Torture forensic medico-legal reports.
Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society (HIAS) - Ukraine	4 Legal Counsellors/Translators who conduct adjudication interviews with asylum seekers and work on COI
Helsinki Foundation for Human Rights (HFHR) - Poland	1 COI Researcher working exclusively on COI
Human Rights League – Slovakia	7 (4 lawyers and 3 summer interns)
Hungarian Helsinki Committee - Hungary	2 staff members (Project Manager and Program Coordinator), not exclusively on COI
Informationsverbund Asyl & Migration - Germany	1, not working exclusively on COI
International Fund for Health and Environment Protection ‘Region Karpat’ (NEEKA) - Ukraine	We haven’t got a COI department, but our lawyers deal with COI sources when considering the cases.
Kharkiv Regional Charitable Foundation “Social service of assistance”-UNHCR IP - Ukraine	4 Legal Counsellors
Legal Aid Board - Ireland	13 work in total in the unit; not all work on COI as the Refugee Documentation Centre is part of the Research and Information Unit (RIU) of the Legal Aid Board. The unit is staffed by 1 Assistant Director, 1 Librarian, 1 Higher Executive Officer, 4 Executive Officers, 5 Clerical Officers and 1 Law Clerk (5 researchers plus 1 manager are estimated to work full time)

Norwegian Organization for Asylum Seekers (NOAS) - Norway	None work specifically on COI. We provide free legal aid to asylum seekers, and COI is thus of course important for our work.
RESCATE - Spain	2 Legal Assistants. At the time being only one is working on COI.
Romanian National Council for Refugees (CNRR) - Romania	2 COI Researchers
Schweizerische Flüchtlingshilfe (SFH) - Switzerland	2 COI Researchers and 1 Trainee

2. Have those engaged in COI research completed ACCORD's training? If yes, how many and when? If not, have they attended any other COI specific training relevant for their work?

Asylos - Belgium/France/Greece/United Kingdom	None of the team members have completed the ACCORD training. Asylos has developed its own strict internal guidelines and procedures for researching COI.
Asylum Aid - United Kingdom	No
Asylum Protection Centre (APC) – Serbia	Yes, one person completed ACCORD training. Other persons received training prepared and conducted by another staff member that has passed the ACCORD training. Also, UNHCR held a few very general training sessions concerning COI research in the past years and delivered COI manuals.
Asylum Research Consultancy (ARC) – United Kingdom	Yes, both staff members attended ACCORD's training in 2008. They also completed an internal COI training programme at the Immigration Advisory Service when they joined the Research Unit there in 2007.
Austrian Centre for Country of Origin and Asylum (ACCORD) - Austria	Yes, as the training is part of the job induction for COI Researchers.
Country Information Research Centre (CIREC) - Switzerland	No
Danish Refugee Council (DRC) - Denmark	No
Dutch Council for Refugees (DCR) – The Netherlands	Yes, they have all completed the ACCORD online training course. 2 staff members completed the full ACCORD training. We have developed our own training manual/ guidelines for training new staff
Flemish Refugee Action - Belgium	Yes, one of the two staff members attended the ACCORD training, which took place in June 2004 in Vienna.
Forum Réfugiés -COSI - France	No – but we plan on completing the ACCORD training shortly
Freedom from Torture - United Kingdom	Yes, the Researcher completed the ACCORD training in 2008 when employed as a COI researcher in another organisation.
Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society (HIAS) - Ukraine	Yes, 4 Legal Counsellors/Translators and 2 Lawyers participated in COI training led by ACCORD's experts and organized by UNHCR
Helsinki Foundation for Human Rights (HFHR) - Poland	Yes, our COI Researcher completed ACCORD's e-training course in 2006.
Human Rights League – Slovakia	Each lawyer, and summer intern has taken the COI research course.
Hungarian Helsinki Committee - Hungary	Yes, both persons.
Informationsverbund Asyl & Migration - Germany	Yes, 1 participated in the development of the training manual in 2004 and the e-learning tool in 2007.
International Fund for Health and Environment Protection 'Region Karpat' (NEEKA) - Ukraine	One training in DRC project "Information about the Country of Origin" for social workers concerning UNAMs in 2012 UNHCR/ACCORD training in Hungary, "Researching Country of Origin Information (COI)", 2010 UNHCR/ACCORD training "Information about the Country of Origin", 2012
Kharkiv Regional Charitable Foundation "Social service of assistance"-UNHCR IP - Ukraine	Yes, 3 of them have completed ACCORD's training in April 2012
Legal Aid Board - Ireland	Yes, 11 staff members have completed ACCORD training and all staff have completed the European Asylum Curriculum (EAC) COI Module on-line course. The RDC has two Trainers on the ACCORD training network and has four EAC accredited COI Trainers in the Unit.

Norwegian Organization for Asylum Seekers (NOAS) - Norway	No
RESCATE - Spain	Yes, both staff members have completed the ACCORD training.
Romanian National Council for Refugees (CNRR) - Romania	Yes, both of the ROCCORD Researchers have completed the ACCORD training (June 2009 session). One Researcher has also completed the Romanian Immigration Office COI Training program (February 2010).
Schweizerische Flüchtlingshilfe (SFH) - Switzerland	Yes, 2 have completed the ACCORD COI blended learning training

3. If applicable, how is your COI department funded?

Asylos - Belgium/France/Greece/United Kingdom	Asylos has received funds from Sciences Po and the Open Society Foundations.
Asylum Aid - United Kingdom	Not applicable
Asylum Protection Centre (APC) – Serbia	The COI Unit has thus far been funded over project lines in the APC legal aid project. Since 2012 Lawyers are conducting COI research in the scope of their legal activities but not as a COI Unit. In the second half of 2012 APC gained a project COI library and in that manner funded APC COI unit. In 2013. APC COI unit is still functioning mostly upon non-project direct funds of the APC waiting for the new concrete COI funds.
Asylum Research Consultancy (ARC) – United Kingdom	The ARC case-specific research is mainly funded by immigration law firms who in turn are privately funded by clients, or are funded by legal aid (via the Legal Aid Agency, formerly known as the Legal Services Commission). ARC is also co-funded for its COI work by UNHCR.
Austrian Centre for Country of Origin and Asylum (ACCORD) - Austria	European Refugee Fund (ERF), Austrian Ministry of the Interior, UNHCR, Austrian Red Cross, Legal Aid Board Ireland, Austrian NGOs; income for research and training services apart from Austria and UNHCR
Country Information Research Centre (CIREC) - Switzerland	We receive funds from private donors institutions
Danish Refugee Council (DRC) - Denmark	The DRC is funded by the State to do counselling and COI
Dutch Council for Refugees (DCR) – The Netherlands	Our organisation is funded by government funding, private donations and funding from the Dutch Postcode Lottery (charity lottery) as well as contributions from lawyers who use our Helpdesk services (including COI, but also legal advice)
Flemish Refugee Action - Belgium	We fund the staff from social employment measures that we can use as an organisation (limited funding).
Forum Réfugiés -COSI - France	The country of origin information comes mostly from the documentation centre of Forum Réfugiés-COSI, which is funded through the various projects of the association and the ERF (European Refugee Fund)
Freedom from Torture - United Kingdom	Not applicable
Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society (HIAS) - Ukraine	COI research as part of refugee status determination interview process is funded by UNHCR
Helsinki Foundation for Human Rights (HFHR) - Poland	Position of the COI researcher is funded within a European Refugee Fund (ERF) project.
Human Rights League – Slovakia	Not applicable
Hungarian Helsinki Committee - Hungary	The organization has no (restricted or unrestricted) funding for this [COI-research] activity.
Informationsverbund Asyl & Migration - Germany	Not applicable
International Fund for Health and Environment Protection 'Region Karpat' (NEEKA) - Ukraine	We don't have special COI funds for a department, but this problem is very important to our NGO.
Kharkiv Regional Charitable Foundation "Social service of assistance"-UNHCR IP - Ukraine	[No answer provided]
Legal Aid Board - Ireland	Through central exchequer funds routed through our parent department, the Legal Aid Board (a statutory body which is itself funded via the Department of Justice and Equality)

Norwegian Organization for Asylum Seekers (NOAS) - Norway	[No answer provided]
RESCATE - Spain	COI Research is done within the legal assistance. The lawyers are covered with project funding and the entity's private funds. We also try to count with volunteering for this task.
Romanian National Council for Refugees (CNRR) - Romania	ROCCORD is funded from the same ERF fund as the larger refugee programme, as a separate COI project.
Schweizerische Flüchtlingshilfe (SFH) - Switzerland	General and specific donations, fees for services

4. Does the COI department/ do those working on COI focus on national jurisdiction, jurisdiction at the EU level or both?

Asylos - Belgium/France/Greece/United Kingdom	Both
Asylum Aid - United Kingdom	Both
Asylum Protection Centre (APC) – Serbia	National jurisdiction
Asylum Research Consultancy (ARC) – United Kingdom	National jurisdiction
Austrian Centre for Country of Origin and Asylum (ACCORD) - Austria	Both
Country Information Research Centre (CIREC) - Switzerland	National jurisdiction
Danish Refugee Council (DRC) - Denmark	Both, we focus mostly on COI related to the countries of origin relevant in Denmark but also increasingly on information relating to the Dublin procedure in relevant EU countries, such as Greece, Italy, Malta and Hungary.
Dutch Council for Refugees (DCR) – The Netherlands	Both, mostly focused on national jurisdiction but we also do COI research for cases at ECtHR/ EU Court of Justice level.
Flemish Refugee Action - Belgium	National jurisdiction
Forum Réfugiés -COSI - France	Both, some members of the future COI group have expertise at the national jurisdiction and EU jurisdiction level.
Freedom from Torture - United Kingdom	The primary intended audiences for Freedom from Torture’s country based research reports are UN monitoring and accountability mechanisms. FFT country reports are also used in the context of refugees status determination procedures in the UK and are available for use in other (i.e. EU) jurisdictions via COI databases etc.
Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society (HIAS) - Ukraine	Both, COI research is undertaken to support asylum seeker’s claims in local courts dealing with asylum seekers’ appeals and presented there by HIAS Kyiv. COI is also used for preparing cases on behalf of asylum seekers to be submitted to the European Court of Human Rights (ECtHR)
Helsinki Foundation for Human Rights (HFHR) - Poland	Both
Human Rights League – Slovakia	Those working on COI focus on both national and EU jurisdiction.
Hungarian Helsinki Committee - Hungary	Both, our latest project dealing with COI at the EU level was “COI in Judicial Practices” (ERF CA 2008)
Informationsverbund Asyl & Migration - Germany	National jurisdiction
International Fund for Health and Environment Protection ‘Region Karpat’ (NEEKA) - Ukraine	NGO lawyers who deal with COI focus on national jurisdiction and jurisdiction at the EU level.
Kharkiv Regional Charitable Foundation “Social service of assistance”-UNHCR IP - Ukraine	Both of them, but this depends on the case.
Legal Aid Board - Ireland	Both
Norwegian Organization for Asylum Seekers (NOAS) - Norway	[No answer provided]
RESCATE - Spain	Both
Romanian National Council for Refugees (CNRR) - Romania	Both

Schweizerische Flüchtlingshilfe (SFH) - Switzerland	National jurisdiction
--	-----------------------

5. Do you provide COI research at government level decision-making stage and/or appeal level?

Asylos - Belgium/France/Greece/United Kingdom	Both levels
Asylum Aid - United Kingdom	No
Asylum Protection Centre (APC) – Serbia	Both levels; we used to present COI reports on our website and they were available for the first level officers as well as for the second instance and third instance body. Since 2012 we have been sending them upon request and since second half of the 2012 we are presenting COI reports online and doing concrete COI query respond reports upon the request of the state institutions involved in asylum procedure.
Asylum Research Consultancy (ARC) – United Kingdom	Both, but the vast majority of research reports are requested at the appeal stage.
Austrian Centre for Country of Origin and Asylum (ACCORD) - Austria	Both levels; COI research is provided for all target groups in Austria; about 50% of queries are submitted by governmental agencies and courts and 50% from legal advisors of asylum seekers. ecoi.net and COI training is open for all target groups.
Country Information Research Centre (CIREC) - Switzerland	Both
Danish Refugee Council (DRC) - Denmark	Our country reports are public and shared with relevant authorities, lawyers, policy makers etc.
Dutch Council for Refugees (DCR) – The Netherlands	Both
Flemish Refugee Action - Belgium	Both levels; we provide COI for any asylum seeker asking for it, both for first asylum decisions as for appeal cases. We try to keep the focus on asylum cases though.
Forum Réfugiés -COSI - France	In the framework of requests related to asylum claims, we provide information to lawyers or social workers supporting asylum seekers at the first instance (OFPRA) and at appeal stages (CNDA). We also plan on making some of the COI accessible to everybody.
Freedom from Torture - United Kingdom	Freedom from Torture does not produce COI reports for the purpose of decision-making in individual asylum claims. Our country reports on torture patterns, based on aggregated data, may be used by decision-makers, claimants and/or legal representatives at any level of the refugee status determination process.
Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society (HIAS) - Ukraine	Appeal; COI research is also undertaken to strengthen asylum seekers' claims in local courts dealing with asylum seekers' appeals
Helsinki Foundation for Human Rights (HFHR) - Poland	Both, at first instance and at appeal stage. We provide COI at court stage as well. There is the Office for Foreigners (first instance body) and the Refugee Board (second instance). Next level are administrative courts Administrative Court in Warsaw and High Administrative Court). Administrative courts are not to decide on the merits of asylum claim concerned, but if proper COI assessment is considered as the main violation of relevant administrative procedures we provide up-to-date information on country of origin.
Human Rights League – Slovakia	We send a COI newsletter, we use COI reports for our legal submissions, appeals and in asylum proceedings.
Hungarian Helsinki Committee - Hungary	Both levels but most of the COI research serves the lawyers at the appeal stage. When one of the lawyers of the network represents a client at the first instance stage and requires COI, information is provided also.
Informationsverbund Asyl & Migration - Germany	No. General provision of COI (through homepage and other publications)

International Fund for Health and Environment Protection 'Region Karpat' (NEEKA) - Ukraine	Yes, we do, on regional level.
Kharkiv Regional Charitable Foundation "Social service of assistance"-UNHCR IP - Ukraine	Appeal level; We provide COI for some of the refugee claims (we are going to increase this number) and we systematically provide results of our COI research on the appeal level.
Legal Aid Board - Ireland	Both levels; The RDC provides query responses to all government agencies within the asylum and immigration area in Ireland. This includes first instance, appeal stage, repatriation and governmental legal counsel for asylum seekers (Refugee Legal Service)
Norwegian Organization for Asylum Seekers (NOAS) - Norway	[No answer provided]
RESCATE - Spain	Mainly, we provide COI research at government level decision making stage
Romanian National Council for Refugees (CNRR) - Romania	Both Levels
Schweizerische Flüchtlingshilfe (SFH) - Switzerland	Appeal level mainly, but the papers are published online and also used at government level decision making stage

6. Is the COI department/ are those working on COI in regular contact with the national immigration board/ services? Please specify how often and in what capacity.

Asylos - Belgium/France/Greece/United Kingdom	No
Asylum Aid - United Kingdom	Yes, ad hoc, and as appropriate
Asylum Protection Centre (APC) – Serbia	Yes, persons working on COI are in contact with the national immigration board but until 2012 reports were presented on APC webpage so they were available to immigration officers over the internet. A few times border police officers called for more clarification and specific COI reports on some specific issues and were supplied with the same.
Asylum Research Consultancy (ARC) – United Kingdom	Not directly. We engage with the UKBA Country of Origin Information Service (COIS) teams via other forums e.g. at meetings of the Independent Advisory Group on Country Information (IAGCI) and other externally organised meetings.
Austrian Centre for Country of Origin and Asylum (ACCORD) - Austria	Yes. We provide query responses on a regular basis; we have cooperation meetings about twice a year and on an ad hoc basis with the federal asylum office and the asylum court. The Austrian asylum law foresees an advisory board for the COI activities of the asylum office. The Austrian Red Cross – head of legal department – is member of this board.
Country Information Research Centre (CIREC) - Switzerland	No
Danish Refugee Council (DRC) - Denmark	Yes, our legal consultants are in close contact with staff of the Danish aliens authorities both regarding individual cases and regarding COI.
Dutch Council for Refugees (DCR) – The Netherlands	Yes, we have regular meetings with IND (Dutch Immigration and Naturalisation department of the government) at different levels; COI department and administrative level. In these meetings we exchange practice and expose omissions on practical and policy level. We are also in regular contact with the foreign affairs ministry about the annual and ad hoc country reports they supply.
Flemish Refugee Action - Belgium	No. COI services funded and used by immigration authorities are not accessible for civil society organisations and/or private citizens.
Forum Réfugiés -COSI - France	Yes; in the past, the organisation COSI (which has now merged with Forum Réfugiés) has regularly worked with the immigration board. The OFPRA (the asylum determination body in France) has requested background information about violence in Burundi for instance.
Freedom from Torture - United Kingdom	Yes, we are in contact with the COI producing department of the UK Border Agency (COIS) – we have periodic exchange visits and communicate when we have new research in order for this to be included in UKBA COI Service reports.
Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society (HIAS) - Ukraine	Yes, those who work with COI also provide assistance in interpretation to asylum seekers during RSD interviews at the local migration services on a regular basis (2-3 times per week)
Helsinki Foundation for Human Rights (HFHR) - Poland	No
Human Rights League – Slovakia	The lawyers at HRL are, but not the interns, very frequently, every day work.
Hungarian Helsinki Committee - Hungary	Yes, the COI Senior Training Officer, who is also the Coordinator of the refugee program of the organization, is in regular contact with the Office for Immigration and Nationality (OIN).

Informationsverbund Asyl & Migration - Germany	Yes, (informal) meetings with the COI department of the German Federal Office of Migration and Refugees (Informationszentrum Asyl und Migration at the Bundesamt für Migration und Flüchtlinge (BAMF)) have taken place and are supposed to take place at least once a year. However, COI has not been identified as a possible area of cooperation with the authorities so far.
International Fund for Health and Environment Protection 'Region Karpat' (NEEKA) - Ukraine	We are working closely on COI with Regional Migration Service (RMS), every week. We provide RMS staff with the updated COI, discuss some individual cases.
Kharkiv Regional Charitable Foundation "Social service of assistance"-UNHCR IP - Ukraine	Yes, our staff who work on COI usually hold workshops with migration service staff and border guards. They also support asylum seekers during their visits to migration services when they apply for refugee status or complementary protection. They also have regular telephone and e-mail contacts with these authorities during every-day work.
Legal Aid Board - Ireland	No
Norwegian Organization for Asylum Seekers (NOAS) - Norway	[No answer provided]
RESCATE - Spain	Yes. On a monthly basis and informally, regarding cases we deal with.
Romanian National Council for Refugees (CNRR) - Romania	Yes, we are in regular touch with the Romanian Immigration Office (the COI branch), and we have jointly developed the first and only Romanian COI Portal (www.portal-ito.ro), where we have uploaded most of our COI responses. We also regularly exchange new information on the COI field, humanitarian news, new procedures and legislation etc.
Schweizerische Flüchtlingshilfe (SFH) - Switzerland	Yes, but only irregularly and informally

7. Has your COI department/ have those working on COI been involved in State/ NGO fact-finding missions?

Asylos - Belgium/France/Greece/United Kingdom	No
Asylum Aid - United Kingdom	No
Asylum Protection Centre (APC) – Serbia	Yes, our COI officers are involved in APC fact-finding missions. The first APC fact-finding mission was to Macedonia in March 2012, APC COI officers participated. Receiving Macedonian organisation supporting the research visit- Red Cross of Macedonia –issues: general reception conditions in the asylum system In Macedonia, absence of interpreters in the procedures, number of protections granted, integration, procedural violations in the asylum procedure, smuggling and trafficking of irregular migrants, migration routes over Macedonia, inter-state cooperation with Serbia on the issues of migrants. This information was not publicly available as COI reports but were presented in the APC publication Profile and needs of asylum seekers. Predominantly these information served for the legal representation in the asylum proceedings in Serbia.
Asylum Research Consultancy (ARC) – United Kingdom	No
Austrian Centre for Country of Origin and Asylum (ACCORD) - Austria	ACCORD was involved in former years, for the past few years this was not possible due to budget constraints.
Country Information Research Centre (CIREC) - Switzerland	No
Danish Refugee Council (DRC) - Denmark	Yes, we participate in some of the fact-finding missions undertaken by the Danish Immigration Service. In 2012, DRC participated in fact finding missions to Russia and Iran, and in 2013, in missions to Northern Iraq and Uganda. Generally, the fact-finding missions focus on the security and human rights situation in the relevant country. The mission to Uganda had a specific focus on the situation for LGBT persons, and the mission to Iran and Northern Iraq focused on the situation of Iranian Kurds in Iran. The mission to Russia focused on the possibility of Chechens to settle in the Russian Federation outside of Chechnya. All fact finding reports are in English and available at the website of the Danish Immigration Service (www.newtodenmark.dk) and the website of DRC (www.drc.dk).
Dutch Council for Refugees (DCR) – The Netherlands	No
Flemish Refugee Action - Belgium	No
Forum Réfugiés -COSI - France	Yes, Members of the Association Forum Réfugiés -COSI have attended the Election Observation Mission in the Democratic Republic of Congo in November 2011 for EURAC. A field mission in Armenia took place in October 2012 and a field mission in Albania took place in April 2013. There are no public reports of these missions for the moment but Forum réfugiés-COSI is in the process of expanding its COI tasks and third country oriented projects.
Freedom from Torture - United Kingdom	No
Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society (HIAS) - Ukraine	No
Helsinki Foundation for Human Rights (HFHR) - Poland	No
Human Rights League – Slovakia	Given that HRL is an NGO, yes.

Hungarian Helsinki Committee - Hungary	Yes, June 2011 and April 2012 to Serbia investigating the Serbian asylum system since a lot of asylum-seekers were returned from Hungary to Serbia (without starting the in-merit procedure) on the presumption that Serbia is safe and has a working asylum system. However, our findings did not confirm this. The reports are available here (June 2011) and here (April 2012):
Informationsverbund Asyl & Migration - Germany	No
International Fund for Health and Environment Protection 'Region Karpat' (NEEKA) - Ukraine	Not yet.
Kharkiv Regional Charitable Foundation "Social service of assistance"-UNHCR IP - Ukraine	No
Legal Aid Board - Ireland	No
Norwegian Organization for Asylum Seekers (NOAS) - Norway	Yes, we do conduct one to two fact-finding missions each year where a report is published as a result of the mission. The reports mainly focus on the political and security situation in the relevant country.
RESCATE - Spain	No
Romanian National Council for Refugees (CNRR) - Romania	No, not as yet, although we would be delighted to take part in such a mission.
Schweizerische Flüchtlingshilfe (SFH) - Switzerland	Yes, in a NGO fact-finding mission. Fact-finding missions are carried out on an irregular basis and are not always joint missions with other NGOs. The most recent one was carried out independently in Sri Lanka in September 2012. The report (Sri Lanka: Current Situation, November 2012) is published on our website (English/French/German). However, a previous one in Kosovo in 2011 was carried out with the support of the Society for Threatened People (Gesellschaft für bedrohte Völker (http://www.gfbv.ch/de/)), The mission report was written by SFH and published on the Internet.

8. What kind of COI research end-products does your organisation produce? Research and analysis on asylum process, query responses, summaries of reports, case-specific reports, thematic and/or country reports, involvement in government consultations, policy briefings etc.? Please specify.

<p>Asylos - Belgium/France/Greece/United Kingdom</p>	<p>Asylos conducts research only on demand and provides mainly case-specific reports. It does that either in the form of fully referenced research reports which can range from summarising other available COI reports on a given question, to providing new findings on specific case related issues, mainly through written or oral interviews. In addition, Asylos provides fast track research concerning a particular aspect of a case (e.g. media reports on particular events, verification of documents or other facts).</p>
<p>Asylum Aid - United Kingdom</p>	<p>Research and analysis on asylum process, involvement in government consultations, policy briefings.</p> <p>We do not provide COI or respond to specific queries. We undertake some policy and research work on COI and women.</p>
<p>Asylum Protection Centre (APC) – Serbia</p>	<p>Summaries of COI reports, query responses, case specific reports, country reports.</p>
<p>Asylum Research Consultancy (ARC) – United Kingdom</p>	<p>We produce case-specific country of origin research reports.</p> <p>In order to keep up to date with recent publications and developments in the top refugee producing countries, ARC produces a free bi-monthly ‘COI Update’, which also contains notifications of new UK Border Agency (UKBA) country of origin publications.</p> <p>We are also involved in a project with the Still Human Still Here Coalition to review the country information and case law content of a number of Operational Guidance Notes (OGNs), which are country specific ‘policy’ documents that give guidance to UKBA decision makers on how to assess asylum claims.</p> <p>ARC also undertakes thematic research for UNHCR.</p>

<p>Austrian Centre for Country of Origin and Asylum (ACCORD) - Austria</p>	<p>COI portal www.ecoi.net (in cooperation with Informationsverbund Asyl und Migration Germany)</p> <p>COI training manual: available in 7 languages on www.coi-training.net; new English edition will be published on 28th October 2013</p> <p>Research products: Query responses; Featured topics on selected countries; COI Seminars (international experts inform about a selected topic, all targets groups are invited to submit questions; reports based on COI seminars); Country and topic specific reports and compilations.</p> <p>Our analytical approach for COI products consists in assessing sources and in comparing and contrasting information based on its relevance. We do not draw conclusions.</p> <p>Our researchers are COI research experts, not country experts. Even though they may have a specific country expertise, for their professional performance they have to refrain from adding their own viewpoints. ACCORD research products exclusively comprise information that can be referenced from other sources.</p> <p>We do not engage in policy briefings, government consultations, research and analyses of the asylum process.</p> <p>At the moment researchers are able to access information in the following languages: German, English, French, Spanish, Russian, Arabic, Hebrew, Bosnian/Croatian/Serbian, Portuguese and Japanese. On an occasional basis information in other languages is included in COI research products. Red Cross colleagues help us with translation for Hebrew, Bosnian/Croatian/Serbian, Portuguese and Japanese.</p>
<p>Country Information Research Centre (CIREC) - Switzerland</p>	<p>We provide case-specific query responses</p>
<p>Danish Refugee Council (DRC) - Denmark</p>	<p>We produce 3-4 country profiles per year based on public information and with detailed notes on sources. These reports are produced in Danish to cater for the lawyers and members of the Appeals Board.</p> <p>We may start doing reports with legal analysis of relevant refugee law if funding permits</p>

<p>Dutch Council for Refugees (DCR) – The Netherlands</p>	<p>The end-product we produce the most are individual query responses to lawyers. It contains a short analysis of public sources, sometimes an expert is consulted. Relevant sections of sources are made available as annexes, quoting the source and URL. Letters are in Dutch, English and other language sources are used in their original language.</p> <p>On the most important countries we produce so called “Introductions” in which we describe topics that are most relevant for asylum claims of that Country of Origin. They introduce policy, information from the Ambtsbericht (COI report of the Dutch government), information from other sources and jurisprudence (mostly national, when important for Dutch context international jurisdictions).</p> <p>Specific reports on certain topics (e.g. Apostacy in Iran/ Return to Sri Lanka). For these reports we analyse (first instance) decisions, comparing them to COI. Mostly for lawyers to use, also for discussions with government officials/ lobbying</p> <p>Summaries of Ambtsberichten (country reports published by the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs)</p>
<p>Flemish Refugee Action - Belgium</p>	<p>Flemish Refugee Action recently started working on an in-house country report on Afghanistan, for internal use and for member organisations. The country report gets contributions from the COI department, but also from the legal and policy departments.</p>
<p>Forum Réfugiés-COSI - France</p>	<p>Forum réfugiés-Cosi produces several end-products:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Monitoring on the situation in the countries of origin of asylum seekers and third countries and migration issues in general (including migration routes) through the compilation of news, articles, reports distributed via a monthly report. - Compilation of articles, statistics, briefing notes in a weekly press review distributed internally (for now) - Consolidation and dissemination of social, humanitarian and economic information on the political, security, and human rights situations in the countries of origin (starting with Central Africa and the Great Lakes) thanks to country profiles and factsheets available internally and externally through the RITIMO network.
<p>Freedom from Torture - United Kingdom</p>	<p>Research is conducted using aggregated data from Freedom From Torture’s forensic medico-legal reports on the incidence and patterns of torture in particular countries of origin of Freedom from Torture clients.</p>
<p>Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society (HIAS) - Ukraine</p>	<p>HIAS Kyiv works on COI as part of refugee status determination procedure aimed at adjudication of asylum seekers’ claims.</p> <p>Designated staff search COI for every asylum case considered for further legal assistance.</p> <p>HIAS Kyiv also conducts regularly COI seminars/training for the relevant state authorities and local refugee-assisting NGOs.</p>
<p>Helsinki Foundation for Human Rights (HFHR) - Poland</p>	<p>We produce summaries of reports, case-specific reports, thematic and country reports (however these are prepared on the basis of available reports, jurisprudence, policy papers etc.)</p>

Human Rights League – Slovakia	Our COI research gives relevant information in a specific country and/or region concerning human rights. We examine if these rights are being violated and what the current conditions are for persons residing in such country/region in the realm of our work with foreigners coming from these countries and present in Slovakia.
Hungarian Helsinki Committee - Hungary	<p>Research on the use of COI by the judiciary in the EU, please see</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Country Information in Asylum Procedures – Quality as a Legal Requirement in the EU ○ Structural differences and access to country information (COI) at European courts dealing with asylum <p>Provide training on the topic of COI (both use and research) for judges, authorities, lawyers, NGO practitioners and policy makers.</p> <p>Query responses for the lawyers network of the organization</p>
Informationsverbund Asyl & Migration - Germany	Occasional publications on COI issues (usually as part of our publication “ASYLMAGAZIN”). Cooperating partner of www.ecoi.net
International Fund for Health and Environment Protection ‘Region Karpat’ (NEEKA) - Ukraine	Cases’ conclusions are based on the International organizations’ and country reports.
Kharkiv Regional Charitable Foundation “Social service of assistance”-UNHCR IP - Ukraine	Researches and analysis of asylum process, case-specific reports, involvement in government consultations.
Legal Aid Board - Ireland	<p>RDC (Refugee Documentation Centre) query responses.</p> <p>RDC Country Information Packs (reference documents highlighting key sources under specific subject areas)</p> <p>Country Marriage and Adoption Packs (longer form queries on these specific issues e.g. marriage legislation/procedures in countries of origin).</p> <p>The RDC acts as an independent Unit and therefore does not participate in policy briefings etc.</p> <p>The RDC also produces a twice yearly publication ‘The Researcher’ which contains COI related articles from external contributors and RDC staff.</p> <p>Library bulletins highlighting new acquisitions and resources are also produced 3 times per year.</p> <p>Case summaries are sometimes prepared.</p>
Norwegian Organization for Asylum Seekers (NOAS) - Norway	We conduct one to two fact-finding missions each year where a report is published as a result of the mission. The reports mainly focus on the political and security situation in the relevant country.
RESCATE - Spain	COI research on a case-to-case basis: in most cases, the purpose of the research would be the elaboration of case-specific reports (using different sources, including national and EU level jurisdiction) for the people we assist. Also, within the psychosocial intervention, some COI research might be advisable, depending on the case and the specific nature of the intervention required.
Romanian National Council for Refugees (CNRR) - Romania	<p>Mainly produce query responses which are sent to judges, lawyers, legal counsellors etc.</p> <p>Research papers on specific topics (like the Palestinian – Israel topic, countries most liable to migration etc.).</p>

Schweizerische Flüchtlingshilfe (SFH) - Switzerland	Updates (country reports) Thematic reports Auskünfte (Query Responses partly case specific) Policy Papers Compilations (Summaries and links)
--	--

9. Are the COI research end-products publicly available? Please specify which ones are and which ones are not. Also, if possible please provide link to reports.

Asylos- Belgium/France/Greece/United Kingdom	As of September 2013, Asylos reports were only available to the lawyer who commissioned them. Asylos is planning to make reports generally available to asylum lawyers barring case sensitive, personal information.
Asylum Aid - United Kingdom	Yes, we don't have COI end-products but the following reports include information about COI and are publicly available: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Country of Origin Information and women: Researching gender and persecution in the context of asylum and human rights claims, 2007 o Unsustainable: the quality of initial decision-making in women's asylum claims, 2011 o I feel like as a woman I'm not welcome: A gender analysis of UK asylum law, policy and practice, 2012 o Gender-related Asylum Claims in Europe: Comparative analysis of law, policies and practice focusing on women in nine EU Member States, 2012
Asylum Protection Centre (APC) – Serbia	Yes, specific COI reports and country reports, are available over APC webpage. Query responses are not publicly available
Asylum Research Consultancy (ARC) – United Kingdom	No, we do not make our case-specific reports available as they contain personal client information. Reference to ARC reports may be made in publically available asylum appeal determinations or in Country Guidance Determinations (see for example AK (Article 15(c)) Afghanistan CG [2012] UKUT 163 (IAC) (18 May 2012) . Our 'COI Update', our commentaries on OGNs and reports commissioned by UNHCR are available on our website www.asylumresearchconsultancy.com
Austrian Centre for Country of Origin and Asylum (ACCORD) - Austria	Yes, research products are published on www.ecoi.net . In general query responses are published. Due to data protection or because a response contains very specific information that is not interesting for a broader target group we may decide not to publish.
Country Information Research Centre (CIREC) - Switzerland	The reports are listed on our website and may be made available upon request (after consultation with the client concerned and deletion of any confidential information)
Danish Refugee Council (DRC) - Denmark	Yes, all our reports are public and available on our website www.drc.dk However, personal and case-sensitive information is not made public.
Dutch Council for Refugees (DCR) – The Netherlands	No, letters to lawyers (query responses) are only made available to them. They do make them publicly available when using them in individual case/ court. All other products are published on Vluchtweb – our online database (available with subscription only – used by lawyers/ VluchtelingenWerk staff in both headquarters and in reception centres, some NGO's and academics and courts)
Flemish Refugee Action - Belgium	Not yet applicable

Forum Réfugiés-COSI - France	<p>Yes, country profiles produced by the Documentation Centre are available on the website of the Network Ritimo: www.ritimo.org . Please see</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ L'Ouganda de Museveni November 2009 ○ La République centrafricaine : un pouvoir sous tutelle June 2010 ○ Relations France-Rwanda : du soutien aveugle à la rupture July 2011 ○ L'Afrique des Grands Lacs sort-elle de la tourmente, July 2011 ○ Vers une paix durable ? July 2011 ○ L'opacité de la gestion pétrolière au Congo-Brazzaville, January 2011 ○ Chronologie et histoire récente de l'Angola July 2012 ○ Les mouvements de résistance September 2012 ○ République Démocratique du Congo : une difficile reconstruction de l'Etat December 2012 ○ Burundi : L'impasse politique January 2013 <p>More specific research on asylum and geopolitics are available on the intranet and in the documentation centre of the association.</p>
Freedom from Torture - United Kingdom	<p>Yes – 'Out of the Silence: New Evidence of Ongoing Torture in Sri Lanka', 2011; 'Freedom from Torture Briefing: Sri Lankan Tamils tortured on return from the UK', 2012; 'We will make you regret everything – Torture in Iran since the 2009 elections', 2013; publication forthcoming on torture of women in the DRC (2013). All publications are available at: http://www.freedomfromtorture.org/what-we-do/17/publications</p>
Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society (HIAS) - Ukraine	No
Helsinki Foundation for Human Rights (HFHR) - Poland	No, they are not publicly available.
Human Rights League – Slovakia	Yes, CoI newsletter. We also publish reports on our website.
Hungarian Helsinki Committee - Hungary	Only the comparative research. Please see previous question.
Informationsverbund Asyl & Migration - Germany	<p>Yes, available at:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - www.ecoi.net - www.asyl.net/index.php?id=233
International Fund for Health and Environment Protection 'Region Karpat' (NEEKA) - Ukraine	<p>We use mostly the information from:</p> <p>http://www.refworld.org/cgi-bin/texis/vtx/rwmain</p> <p>http://www.ecoi.net/</p> <p>http://www.ukba.homeoffice.gov.uk/policyandlaw/guidance/coi/</p> <p>http://www.irin.com/tf/IRIN/home?path=/&host=www.irin.com&</p> <p>etc.</p>
Kharkiv Regional Charitable Foundation "Social service of assistance"-UNHCR IP - Ukraine	Our end-products are not publicly available.
Legal Aid Board - Ireland	Yes, RDC end products are all publicly accessible. RDC anonymised and sanitised query responses are provided to REFWORLD and ECOI.net. Country Information Packs are sent to ECOI.net. All our reports and queries are available on an in-house database and library system intranet. Unfortunately this is not publicly accessible at present. It is hoped to link to the European COI portal at a future date.
Norwegian Organization for Asylum Seekers (NOAS) - Norway	Yes, all reports are made publicly available. Links are provided on our web page www.noas.no

RESCATE - Spain	The research is done for the only purpose of legal support in the cases we are involved with.
Romanian National Council for Refugees (CNRR) - Romania	Yes, most of them are publicly available on the Romanian COI Portal (www.portal-ito.ro). For confidentiality purposes, all personal information is erased beforehand. For example, you can read the ROCCORD report on Palestinian refugees here
Schweizerische Flüchtlingshilfe (SFH) - Switzerland	Yes, Updates, Auskünfte, thematic reports, Policy Papers are online http://www.fluechtlingshilfe.ch/herkunftslander

10. In which language(s) do you provide services?

Asylos - Belgium/France/Greece/United Kingdom	The reports are written either in English (e.g. for Greek and UK lawyers) or in French (for Belgian and French lawyers). The research is conducted in nearly 30 languages.
Asylum Aid - United Kingdom	English
Asylum Protection Centre (APC) – Serbia	Serbian
Asylum Research Consultancy (ARC) – United Kingdom	English
Austrian Centre for Country of Origin and Asylum (ACCORD) - Austria	German, English, French, Spanish, Russian
Country Information Research Centre (CIREC) - Switzerland	French
Danish Refugee Council (DRC) - Denmark	Mostly in Danish, but fact finding reports are done in English. Query responses and complaints to international bodies are often in English, whereas a request for review of a case is in Danish.
Dutch Council for Refugees (DCR) – The Netherlands	Dutch, English (rarely)
Flemish Refugee Action - Belgium	Dutch, English, French and German
Forum Réfugiés-COSI - France	French
Freedom from Torture - United Kingdom	Our research publications are in English.
Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society (HIAS) - Ukraine	English, Russian, Arabic, French, Farsi, Pashto, Lingala, Amharic, Somali, Bengali, Hindi
Helsinki Foundation for Human Rights (HFHR) - Poland	Polish
Human Rights League – Slovakia	Slovak and English
Hungarian Helsinki Committee - Hungary	Query responses in English (the lawyers are translating them, sometimes with the help of interns). Both comparative studies mentioned above are available in English, German and French. In addition to that, “Country information in asylum procedures – quality as a legal requirement in the EU” is also available in Spanish, Italian, Polish, Hungarian, Czech and Russian.
Informationsverbund Asyl & Migration - Germany	German and English
International Fund for Health and Environment Protection ‘Region Karpat’ (NEEKA) - Ukraine	Ukrainian, Russian, English We involve interpreters (their database was created) of Arabic, Farsi/Dari, Somalian, Tamil, Tigrinya languages.
Kharkiv Regional Charitable Foundation “Social service of assistance”-UNHCR IP - Ukraine	This depends on the situation: if we use COI for internal purposes (legal assessments) we do this in English; if we appeal, end-products could be presented in Russian or Ukrainian (we make unofficial translation of quotes from COI).
Legal Aid Board - Ireland	English

Norwegian Organization for Asylum Seekers (NOAS) - Norway	Norwegian or English
RESCATE - Spain	Spanish
Romanian National Council for Refugees (CNRR) - Romania	Romanian
Schweizerische Flüchtlingshilfe (SFH) - Switzerland	German and French

11. Do you translate information you collect for your COI research yourself or do you engage a professional translation service?

Asylos - Belgium/France/Greece/United Kingdom	We translate in-house.
Asylum Aid - United Kingdom	Not applicable
Asylum Protection Centre (APC) – Serbia	We translate information we collect by ourselves.
Asylum Research Consultancy (ARC) – United Kingdom	Neither. We do not specifically research for foreign language material. If we are aware of foreign language material then we will alert this to the legal representative, but it is their decision whether to engage professional translation. Funding and the speed of the asylum process may not allow this.
Austrian Centre for Country of Origin and Asylum (ACCORD) - Austria	We translate ourselves. When indispensable, we ask colleagues from the Red Cross to help us with other languages e.g. Farsi, Dari or Turkish.
Country Information Research Centre (CIREC) - Switzerland	We translate information ourselves
Danish Refugee Council (DRC) - Denmark	Mostly we translate ourselves, but it depends on the language
Dutch Council for Refugees (DCR) – The Netherlands	We do not translate information, we use sources in their original language.
Flemish Refugee Action - Belgium	No. Sources are used in their original language.
Forum Réfugiés-COSI - France	We translate information we collect by ourselves.
Freedom from Torture - United Kingdom	Our data sources are in English; we do not translate our publications.
Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society (HIAS) - Ukraine	HIAS Kyiv translates COI with the help of in-house experts. Translation agencies are used on an exceptional basis.
Helsinki Foundation for Human Rights (HFHR) - Poland	We translate information to Polish. We do not engage professional translators.
Human Rights League – Slovakia	Depending on funding. If we do not have funding, we translate ourselves pro bono.
Hungarian Helsinki Committee - Hungary	Query responses are in English (the lawyers are translating them, sometimes with the help of interns). Both comparative studies mentioned above are available in English, German and French. In addition to that, “Country information in asylum procedures – quality as a legal requirement in the EU” is also available in Spanish, Italian, Polish, Hungarian, Czech and Russian.
Informationsverbund Asyl & Migration - Germany	No
International Fund for Health and Environment Protection ‘Region Karpat’ (NEEKA) - Ukraine	Sometimes we use available sources to translate COI for court instances or other relevant authorities.
Kharkiv Regional Charitable Foundation “Social service of assistance”-UNHCR IP - Ukraine	We make unofficial translation by ourselves.

Legal Aid Board - Ireland	No
Norwegian Organization for Asylum Seekers (NOAS) - Norway	If the COI research is translated it is done by our staff.
RESCATE - Spain	Yes. The translation is done by our staff.
Romanian National Council for Refugees (CNRR) - Romania	Yes, we translate them ourselves. One of the ROCCORD Researchers is a certified translator, so the quality of our translations are assured.
Schweizerische Flüchtlingshilfe (SFH) - Switzerland	Ourselves, only in some cases we have the funds for a translator e.g. issues concerning information in Russian

12. How is COI material referenced? Is a full list of the sources consulted in undertaking the COI research provided?

Asylos - Belgium/France/Greece/United Kingdom	The reports cite sources extensively and if translated also provide the source in the original language. They also include an overview of sources consulted for each report.
Asylum Aid - United Kingdom	Not applicable
Asylum Protection Centre (APC) – Serbia	Yes, a full list of sources consulted is provided.
Asylum Research Consultancy (ARC) – United Kingdom	Yes, all full original documents are included in our research reports, which include a direct weblink. A full list of sources consulted is not included.
Austrian Centre for Country of Origin and Asylum (ACCORD) - Austria	Sources that were integrated in a research product are referenced. In case no information was found sources and/or tools consulted along with search terms are presented in a query response.
Country Information Research Centre (CIREC) - Switzerland	We list only sources where relevant information has been found
Danish Refugee Council (DRC) - Denmark	All sources are listed. However, in fact finding reports, it is sometimes necessary to keep the identity of a source confidential. As an example, embassies often prefer to be referred to as “a Western Embassy”.
Dutch Council for Refugees (DCR) – The Netherlands	Yes, a full list is provided. See end-products: for query responses relevant section of sources are made available as annex, quoting the source and URL. Other products contain footnotes with full references.
Flemish Refugee Action - Belgium	Reference to relevant sources; we provide clients with the sources and a short description of what is to be found in them.
Forum Réfugiés-COSI - France	The documents are referenced in the documentation centre. Records corresponding to the documents are classified in a database. All documents are stored and indexed in the hard-drive at the documentation centre, searchable under specific headings. A specific database by countries and themes will be put in place before as soon as possible to ease the search by keywords.
Freedom from Torture - United Kingdom	The research is based on primary sources – individual medico-legal reports which are anonymised and reported in aggregate. Any other sources referred to are fully referenced.
Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society (HIAS) - Ukraine	[No answer provided]
Helsinki Foundation for Human Rights (HFHR) - Poland	Yes, a full list of sources consulted is listed. This follows with links to these sources.
Human Rights League – Slovakia	Referenced using a bibliography and information as to where certain facts were found during COI research.
Hungarian Helsinki Committee - Hungary	In case of query responses, the reference includes name of publisher, title, date of publishing, date it was accessed and URL. The comparative reports follow the academic rules of referencing.
Informationsverbund Asyl & Migration - Germany	Not applicable
International Fund for Health and Environment Protection ‘Region Karpat’ (NEEKA) - Ukraine	The necessary COI materials are added to the appeal (if the court requires).
Kharkiv Regional Charitable Foundation “Social service of assistance”-UNHCR IP - Ukraine	We often provide the quotes from the COI related to the case, but we do not usually provide the full list of the sources consulted to the authorities (because they usually do not pay proper attention even to the COI quotes provided), but we always provide the full name of the source and weblinks.

Legal Aid Board - Ireland	At the end of each query the sources consulted are shown and the date of access. A style guide is used for the preparation and referencing of responses in an agreed format.
Norwegian Organization for Asylum Seekers (NOAS) - Norway	Yes, a full list of consulted sources is provided, except sources that we promised anonymity, because of potential risk to the sources.
RESCATE - Spain	Yes, a full list of sources consulted is provided, including weblinks to the original source.
Romanian National Council for Refugees (CNRR) - Romania	Yes, we provide a full and integral list of references for our sources in the COI responses we send.
Schweizerische Flüchtlingshilfe (SFH) - Switzerland	No not all consulted sources are provided but all information we use is referenced in the footnotes

13. Does the COI department/ do those working on COI consult experts or local country based NGOs on certain topics/ themes/ countries? Please specify.

Asylos - Belgium/France/Greece/ United Kingdom	Most research requests from the lawyers are case specific and require interviews with partners, local NGOs, journalists, other researchers or members of international organisations.
Asylum Aid - United Kingdom	Not applicable
Asylum Protection Centre (APC) – Serbia	Very rarely were local NGOs and experts consulted.
Asylum Research Consultancy (ARC) – United Kingdom	No, in general we do not consult local experts, unless specifically asked to for e.g. to contact a shelter about capacity/admission policies etc. We typically only consult publicly available sources, but these often include locally based NGOs.
Austrian Centre for Country of Origin and Asylum (ACCORD) - Austria	Yes, experts are consulted for a wide range of topics and countries – depending on the information needs and availability of information from other sources.
Country Information Research Centre (CIREC) - Switzerland	We do consult regularly experts or local NGOs on various issues and countries, especially when specific information is not or insufficiently available from other publicly available sources. We therefore have a large network of reliable people to contact if need be, listed by country and themes.
Danish Refugee Council (DRC) - Denmark	Mostly we use information which is publicly available, but sometimes we use our own networking through the international activities of the Danish Refugee Council.
Dutch Council for Refugees (DCR) – The Netherlands	Yes, we have an expert database (for internal use only) containing experts (academics/ NGOs etc.) We use these contact when more general sources are not clear/ to get more specific information/ reinforce info from other sources
Flemish Refugee Action - Belgium	No
Forum Réfugiés-COSI - France	Forum réfugiés-Cosi has partners based in the African Great Lakes region, specifically in the Democratic Republic of Congo. We receive press releases and information they collect at the local level.
Freedom from Torture - United Kingdom	FFT’s country reports are based on medico-legal reports produced by specialist doctors trained in the forensic documentation of torture. We may consult relevant country experts in the course of the research but we have not to date worked with in-country NGOs.
Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society (HIAS) - Ukraine	HIAS Kyiv consults local refugee-assisting NGOs on given asylum seeker’s cases where COI is required to analyse the asylum claims.
Helsinki Foundation for Human Rights (HFHR) - Poland	No
Human Rights League – Slovakia	NGOs in human rights collaborate together and do share information about certain themes/countries.
Hungarian Helsinki Committee - Hungary	No
Informationsverbund Asyl & Migration - Germany	Yes, for publications.
International Fund for Health and Environment Protection ‘Region Karpat’ (NEEKA) - Ukraine	We discuss COI on certain topics/ themes/ countries with UNHCR.

Kharkiv Regional Charitable Foundation “Social service of assistance”-UNHCR IP - Ukraine	Yes, we usually additionally consult experts about human rights situation in the counties of the former USSR. We have a big network of experts in this field, for example IYHRM – International Youth Human Rights Movement, Helsinki committees in different countries. If we need information for other countries we mostly use only the published reports.
Legal Aid Board - Ireland	Not routinely. Embassies have been contacted from time to time and we are part of a MedCOI (Medical COI) project at present which does allow some access to field workers in this area.
Norwegian Organization for Asylum Seekers (NOAS) - Norway	Since we have very few reports, it is difficult to say something generally on this topic. But when relevant, we will consult experts both internationally and local.
RESCATE - Spain	Mostly we use information, which is publicly available.
Romanian National Council for Refugees (CNRR) - Romania	We have not encountered the specific situation in which we would need to consult experts on certain Human Rights topics (CNRR being a Human Rights NGO), but we would nevertheless not shy away from this possibility in the near future.
Schweizerische Flüchtlingshilfe (SFH) - Switzerland	Yes, in case of specific information that cannot be found online or in order to verify information

14. Does your organisation have a database where reports are gathered and can be accessed? If so, is this database open to public? Please specify.

Asylos - Belgium/France/Greece/United Kingdom	Asylos has an archive of its completed research assignments, but this is not available to the general public.
Asylum Aid - United Kingdom	Not applicable
Asylum Protection Centre (APC) – Serbia	We have that database open to the public on our webpage through the Asylum library part of the site.
Asylum Research Consultancy (ARC) – United Kingdom	We have an internal database for our own reference. This is not publically available, but we have made country specific databases of useful sources available via our commentaries on OGNs prepared on behalf of the Still Human Still Here Coalition.
Austrian Centre for Country of Origin and Asylum (ACCORD) - Austria	www.ecoi.net
Country Information Research Centre (CIREC) - Switzerland	The reports are listed on our website and may be made available upon request (after consultation with the client concerned and deletion of any confidential information)
Danish Refugee Council (DRC) - Denmark	We don't have a database with this information – it is all available on our website
Dutch Council for Refugees (DCR) – The Netherlands	Yes, we have an online database called Vluchtweb. Contains not only COI but also jurisprudence and government information. Available with subscription only – used by lawyers/ VluchtelingenWerk staff in both headquarters and in reception centres, some NGO's and academics and courts. We have a database for internal use, containing our previous queries.
Flemish Refugee Action - Belgium	No
Forum Réfugiés-COSI - France	Part of the database is available on the Ritimo Network website and also on the Intranet of Forum Réfugiés-COSI. This is not open to the public for now.
Freedom from Torture - United Kingdom	All publications are available on the Freedom from Torture website: http://www.freedomfromtorture.org/what-we-do/17/publications We do not have a separate database of COI sources.
Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society (HIAS) - Ukraine	The database is maintained and regularly updated on the main computer server. It is shared with UNHCR and refugee-assisting NGOs per request.
Helsinki Foundation for Human Rights (HFHR) - Poland	Yes, there is a database. This database is not available to the public.
Human Rights League – Slovakia	Yes.
Hungarian Helsinki Committee - Hungary	No
Informationsverbund Asyl & Migration - Germany	Apart from ecoi.net itself there is also a list of selected COI on our homepage www.asyl.net http://www.asyl.net/index.php?id=71&no_cache=1
International Fund for Health and Environment Protection 'Region Karpat' (NEEKA) - Ukraine	We use all available resources. UNHCR's unit regularly (each month) updates us with COI.
Kharkiv Regional Charitable Foundation "Social service of assistance"-UNHCR IP - Ukraine	We mostly use such databases as Refworld and ECOI
Legal Aid Board - Ireland	Yes but the database is not open to the public. The Library appears as an icon on staff desktops within the Department of Justice area. Private Practitioners and those working as legal representatives of Refugee Legal Service clients can submit queries via e-mail. Remote access for this group is planned but there are some technical/financial difficulties in achieving this at present.

Norwegian Organization for Asylum Seekers (NOAS) - Norway	No, but the reports are published on our webpage, www.noas.org
RESCATE - Spain	No.
Romanian National Council for Refugees (CNRR) - Romania	Yes, we have a public online database, the Romanian COI Portal: www.portal-to.ro .
Schweizerische Flüchtlingshilfe (SFH) - Switzerland	http://www.fluechtlingshilfe.ch/herkunftslander

15. Does your department/ do those working on COI do case-specific research? Please specify.

Asylos - Belgium/France/Greece/United Kingdom	Asylos research is mainly related to specific cases. On some occasions, Asylos has written more general reports, which were related to more than one case and on an issue where the lawyers felt that there was not enough COI available.
Asylum Aid - United Kingdom	No
Asylum Protection Centre (APC) – Serbia	Yes, for each case story we research COI in order to provide proper facts and case background for our claims and statements.
Asylum Research Consultancy (ARC) – United Kingdom	Yes.
Austrian Centre for Country of Origin and Asylum (ACCORD) - Austria	We do research based on questions forwarded by our target groups = query responses. So far about 8.500 queries from governmental and non-governmental parties involved in RSDP have been answered.
Country Information Research Centre (CIREC) - Switzerland	Yes, we do only case-specific researches, by request of our clients.
Danish Refugee Council (DRC) - Denmark	Yes, we are often approached by asylum seekers and sometimes their relatives or representatives with case specific questions and a need for individual counselling.
Dutch Council for Refugees (DCR) – The Netherlands	Yes, see end products. A lawyer calls/ emails us with a case specific question. We try to answer that question as specifically as possible, bearing in mind the stage of the procedure the asylum seeker is in at that moment (first instance/ appeal etc.)
Flemish Refugee Action - Belgium	All research, beside a few exceptions for internal use, is case-specific; the Planet Search service works on demand for individual cases.
Forum Réfugiés-COSI - France	The Documentation Centre performs research on request.
Freedom from Torture - United Kingdom	No
Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society (HIAS) - Ukraine	Each asylum seeker’s case considered by HIAS Kyiv requires case-specific COI research.
Helsinki Foundation for Human Rights (HFHR) - Poland	Yes, we prepare case-specific research.
Human Rights League – Slovakia	Occasionally if information in COI is needed immediately.
Hungarian Helsinki Committee - Hungary	Yes, query responses, exclusively.
Informationsverbund Asyl & Migration - Germany	No
International Fund for Health and Environment Protection ‘Region Karpat’ (NEEKA) - Ukraine	NGO lawyers who deals with COI have certain areas of activity depending on topics/ themes/ countries – areas of origin, gender, conventional grounds, etc.
Kharkiv Regional Charitable Foundation “Social service of assistance”-UNHCR IP - Ukraine	Yes, when we analyse a refugee claim we do case-specific research to assess if the applicant is eligible for free legal assistance in our organisation (i.e. if he is a refugee or a person that falls within the mandate of UNHCR)
Legal Aid Board - Ireland	Yes, each query is dealt with on its own merits.
Norwegian Organization for Asylum Seekers (NOAS) - Norway	Very rarely, but has happened in special cases. An example is when we were in Ethiopia fact finding mission we also checked a person story, by meeting his friends/contact persons in Ethiopia.
RESCATE - Spain	Yes, in the framework of our legal work.

Romanian National Council for Refugees (CNRR) - Romania	Yes, almost always. We receive queries sent by judges, lawyers, and legal counsellors etc., which are case-dependant, for example one question could be: "Does the security force in Syria practice torture and other non-human treatments?" Of course, this would be a case-specific research.
Schweizerische Flüchtlingshilfe (SFH) - Switzerland	Yes

16. How many of these queries (on average) does your organisation produce per month?

Asylos - Belgium/France/Greece/United Kingdom	Since its creation Asylos has completed 85 research cases.
Asylum Aid - United Kingdom	Not applicable
Asylum Protection Centre (APC) – Serbia	3 per month.
Asylum Research Consultancy (ARC) – United Kingdom	1-3 per month.
Austrian Centre for Country of Origin and Asylum (ACCORD) - Austria	About 40 query responses per month; (parallel to reports and featured topic papers)
Country Information Research Centre (CIREC) - Switzerland	5 per month
Danish Refugee Council (DRC) - Denmark	We receive approximately 500 queries and requests for individual assistance in asylum cases through our different counselling activities. Approximately 100-150 of these queries and requests will result in case specific research.
Dutch Council for Refugees (DCR) – The Netherlands	120 per month
Flemish Refugee Action - Belgium	400/year, about 33 per month
Forum Réfugiés-COSI - France	7 queries per month
Freedom from Torture - United Kingdom	Not applicable
Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society (HIAS) - Ukraine	15-20 COI researches per month
Helsinki Foundation for Human Rights (HFHR) - Poland	1 per month (maximum 2 or 3 per month).
Human Rights League – Slovakia	1
Hungarian Helsinki Committee - Hungary	5 query responses per month
Informationsverbund Asyl & Migration - Germany	Not applicable
International Fund for Health and Environment Protection ‘Region Karpat’ (NEEKA) - Ukraine	We have 10-30 cases per a month.
Kharkiv Regional Charitable Foundation “Social service of assistance”-UNHCR IP - Ukraine	10-15 case-specific researches per month. This depends on the amounts of new arrivals.
Legal Aid Board - Ireland	120 per month
Norwegian Organization for Asylum Seekers (NOAS) - Norway	Very rarely, but has happened in special cases. An example is when we were in Ethiopia fact finding mission we also checked a person story, by meeting his friends/contact persons in Ethiopia.
RESCATE - Spain	5-10 per month.
Romanian National Council for Refugees (CNRR) - Romania	20-30 COI responses are sent per month, each containing 3 to 10 separate questions.
Schweizerische Flüchtlingshilfe (SFH) - Switzerland	23 per month

17. What is the nature of the queries?

Asylos - Belgium/France/Greece/United Kingdom	Queries range from very general, such as evaluating available COI sources to very specific points, concerning aspects of a single case.
Asylum Aid - United Kingdom	Not applicable
Asylum Protection Centre (APC) – Serbia	Inquiry about concrete circumstances and facts in relation to the asylum seeker.
Asylum Research Consultancy (ARC) – United Kingdom	Research for individual asylum/human rights cases. The countries/issues vary widely.
Austrian Centre for Country of Origin and Asylum (ACCORD) - Austria	In 2012 queries related to 63 different countries were answered. Please see the published query responses on ecoi.net .
Country Information Research Centre (CIREC) - Switzerland	Most of the time we are asked to verify information provided by the asylum-seeker in his statement (e.g. events, places), to find information about documents the person provided, to assess the availability of a specific medical treatment in the country of origin, to evaluate a personal situation in the country of origin or internal flight alternative. It is mostly very specific queries relating to a particular case.
Danish Refugee Council (DRC) - Denmark	The questions most often concern the asylum and/or humanitarian case in Denmark, but may also concern the situation if returned to another Member State under the Dublin Regulation.
Dutch Council for Refugees (DCR) – The Netherlands	Ranges from “security situation Helmand Afghanistan” to tracing certain individual/ event or factual thing like locating villages and walking routes in Somalia.
Flemish Refugee Action - Belgium	Asylum related mainly.
Forum Réfugiés-COSI - France	Information about local events and background material about the political situations and the geopolitical interplays, and other queries related to the centre themes: right to asylum, rights of the unaccompanied minors, violence against women in countries of origin.
Freedom from Torture - United Kingdom	Not applicable
Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society (HIAS) - Ukraine	Generally, HIAS Kyiv staff search COI for RSD analysis purposes, but we provide previously collected up-to-date COI to refugee-assisting NGOs in Ukraine per request.
Helsinki Foundation for Human Rights (HFHR) - Poland	Situation of a specific group in a country of origin, general human rights violations, situation in the context of an armed conflict, indiscriminate violence.
Human Rights League – Slovakia	[No answer provided]
Hungarian Helsinki Committee - Hungary	Questions related to particular social groups, indiscriminate violence, but also gender and identity-based queries.
Informationsverbund Asyl & Migration - Germany	Not applicable
International Fund for Health and Environment Protection ‘Region Karpat’ (NEEKA) - Ukraine	We research required COI on our own. The relevant UNHCR’s staff controls the decisions quality.
Kharkiv Regional Charitable Foundation “Social service of assistance”-UNHCR IP - Ukraine	Questions on whether there is a reasonable possibility that the applicant would suffer persecution in the country of origin for one of the Convention 1951 grounds
Legal Aid Board - Ireland	Varies from COI (Convention Grounds) to Subsidiary Protection queries
Norwegian Organization for Asylum Seekers (NOAS) - Norway	It would be individualised, depending on the case.
RESCATE - Spain	Depending on the International Protection case.

Romanian National Council for Refugees (CNRR) - Romania	Questions are human rights related (state protection, situation of human rights in a specific country, situation in case of failed asylum seekers returning etc.)
Schweizerische Flüchtlingshilfe (SFH) - Switzerland	Questions concerning the international protection needs according to the conventions and humanitarian protection (mainly health issues).

18. Who are your main clients?

Asylos- Belgium/France	Our main partners are lawyers representing asylum seekers in France, Belgium, UK and Greece. Further expansion is planned for the next semesters.
Asylum Aid - United Kingdom	Not applicable
Asylum Protection Centre (APC) – Serbia	Border police and state institutions, some NGOs in Serbia and in the region of Former Yugoslavia
Asylum Research Consultancy (ARC) – United Kingdom	Individual asylum/human rights claimants, but we are instructed by their legal representatives. Given the number of queries we receive, there aren't noticeable trends in the types of cases, but they do roughly reflect the top asylum seeking nationalities in the UK- Afghanistan is the country we do most research on.
Austrian Centre for Country of Origin and Asylum (ACCORD) - Austria	Lawyers, legal advisors, asylum offices, judges, legal representatives of unaccompanied minors from Austria. Cooperation agreement with UNHCR relating to research services (reports) and COI training. Subscription based query service for Latvia and Lithuania. www.ecoi.net is widely used on an international basis.
Country Information Research Centre (CIREC) - Switzerland	Our main clients are legal counselors working for NGOs who advise and represent asylum-seekers (Service d'Aide Juridique aux Exilés, Centre Social Protestant, Caritas, Centre de Contact Suisse-Immigrés...)
Danish Refugee Council (DRC) - Denmark	Asylum seekers
Dutch Council for Refugees (DCR) – The Netherlands	Lawyers and VluchtelingenWerk staff in reception centres
Flemish Refugee Action - Belgium	Lawyers, Social workers, Asylum seekers
Forum Réfugiés-COSI - France	Employees of the association and the actors working with asylum seekers: jurists, lawyers, social workers, etc.. Also asylum seekers.
Freedom from Torture - United Kingdom	Not applicable
Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society (HIAS) - Ukraine	Asylum seekers residing in Ukraine
Helsinki Foundation for Human Rights (HFHR) - Poland	Asylum-seekers from the Caucasus and in former Soviet Republics, Afghanistan, Uganda, Nigeria, DRC, Algeria, Iraq.
Human Rights League – Slovakia	Asylum-seekers in Slovakia, third country nationals, unaccompanied minors, third country nationals in administrative detention awaiting expulsion, Dublin returnees, stateless persons, victims of trafficking
Hungarian Helsinki Committee - Hungary	Lawyers network of the organization.
Informationsverbund Asyl & Migration - Germany	Not applicable
International Fund for Health and Environment Protection 'Region Karpat' (NEEKA) – Ukraine	Asylum seekers from Afghanistan and Somalia, from migration risk countries (Syria, Iraq, Palestine, Eritrea, Sri-Lanka etc.).
Kharkiv Regional Charitable Foundation "Social service of assistance"-UNHCR IP - Ukraine	Asylum seekers
Legal Aid Board - Ireland	Clients of the First Instance: Office of the Refugee Applications Commissioner (ORAC), Second Instance: Refugee Appeals Tribunal (RAT), Refugee Legal Service (RLS) and private practitioners who work on behalf of the RLS. Other agencies such as Repatriation Unit may also submit queries but would have a lower level of usage than those above.
Norwegian Organization for Asylum Seekers (NOAS) - Norway	Asylum seekers generally.
RESCATE - Spain	International protection seekers

Romanian National Council for Refugees (CNRR) - Romania	Judges who engage in asylum cases, asylum seekers' lawyers, NGO legal counsellors etc.
Schweizerische Flüchtlingshilfe (SFH) - Switzerland	Lawyers from NGOs who provide legal advice for asylum seekers

19. How do you receive the questions? Email? Phone? Please specify.

Asylos - Belgium/France/Greece/United Kingdom	The lawyers submit the questions via email.
Asylum Aid - United Kingdom	Not applicable
Asylum Protection Centre (APC) – Serbia	Via email and over phone. Responses have been sent over email and when something very concrete and specific needs to be addressed immediately, then the researcher can provide proper information over phone.
Asylum Research Consultancy (ARC) – United Kingdom	We receive instructions via ARC’s research request forms electronically, which can be viewed on our website. We may clarify instructions by telephone.
Austrian Centre for Country of Origin and Asylum (ACCORD) - Austria	Via email
Country Information Research Centre (CIREC) - Switzerland	We receive the questions by email, phone or during face-to-face meetings
Danish Refugee Council (DRC) - Denmark	We receive the questions through our counselling activities which involve counselling in person in our office, in asylum camps, in detention centers and through video conference. We also receive questions by e-mail and phone.
Dutch Council for Refugees (DCR) – The Netherlands	Both, most of them by phone
Flemish Refugee Action - Belgium	Email and Phone
Forum Réfugiés-COSI - France	Requests are sent by mail or by phone. People also come directly to the documentation centre.
Freedom from Torture - United Kingdom	Not applicable
Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society (HIAS) - Ukraine	Email
Helsinki Foundation for Human Rights (HFHR) - Poland	A lawyer working on a case passes her/his questions to a COI researcher by e-mail or by phone.
Human Rights League – Slovakia	Email, phone, in person
Hungarian Helsinki Committee - Hungary	Email and face-to-face discussions with the lawyers.
Informationsverbund Asyl & Migration - Germany	Not applicable
International Fund for Health and Environment Protection ‘Region Karpat’ (NEEKA) – Ukraine	We receive the COI updates by e-mail.
Kharkiv Regional Charitable Foundation “Social service of assistance”-UNHCR IP - Ukraine	Our staff who conduct COI research are also decision-makers, so, we ourselves formulate the questions and find answers.
Legal Aid Board - Ireland	Mainly E-Mail. Options to submit queries by phone, fax, through the E-Library system or via the Legal Aid Board website also exist.
Norwegian Organization for Asylum Seekers (NOAS) - Norway	Not applicable
RESCATE - Spain	The staff involved formulate questions and find answers.
Romanian National Council for Refugees (CNRR) - Romania	We receive most of the COI questions by email, but some of them (especially those from courts or from the tribunal) arrive by fax.
Schweizerische Flüchtlingshilfe (SFH) - Switzerland	They have to submit a standardized request. Most of the time they send it by email, some by fax or post

**20. Do you get any accompanying documents? E.g. witness statement, refusal letter, determination?
Please specify.**

Asylos - Belgium/France/Greece/United Kingdom	Mostly, we receive a request for research with general background on the case and other relevant information. In some instances, the request is accompanied by documents that should be verified, translated etc.
Asylum Aid - United Kingdom	Not applicable
Asylum Protection Centre (APC) – Serbia	No
Asylum Research Consultancy (ARC) – United Kingdom	We ask for the government negative decision letter (Reasons for Refusal Letter), witness statement and appeal determination if available.
Austrian Centre for Country of Origin and Asylum (ACCORD) - Austria	It depends on the client; the asylum office adds short background information; sometimes lawyers add (parts of) the file. However, we do not expect too much background information. Part of our training is how to formulate relevant research questions.
Country Information Research Centre (CIREC) - Switzerland	Depending on the case, we may have access to the full file or be provided with hearing statements, medical certificates, documents provided by the asylum-seekers, determinations...
Danish Refugee Council (DRC) - Denmark	Yes, the asylum seekers will often provide us with the decisions from the authorities, documentation related to their asylum claim, medical files, letters etc.
Dutch Council for Refugees (DCR) – The Netherlands	Sometimes, when necessary for responding to the question.
Flemish Refugee Action - Belgium	Most often refusal letters.
Forum Réfugiés-COSI - France	No accompanying documents are usually shared with the requests.
Freedom from Torture - United Kingdom	Not applicable
Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society (HIAS) - Ukraine	No
Helsinki Foundation for Human Rights (HFHR) - Poland	Yes, often the decision on refugee status, asylum-seeker statement or other documents are provided to a COI researcher.
Human Rights League – Slovakia	[No answer provided]
Hungarian Helsinki Committee - Hungary	Yes, in some cases, the COI gathered by the first instance.
Informationsverbund Asyl & Migration - Germany	Not applicable
International Fund for Health and Environment Protection ‘Region Karpat’ (NEEKA) – Ukraine	Some of our clients provide us with the copies of letters, media statements. We attach and analyze these materials.
Kharkiv Regional Charitable Foundation “Social service of assistance”-UNHCR IP - Ukraine	We may have some documents if they are provided by the applicant.
Legal Aid Board - Ireland	No
Norwegian Organization for Asylum Seekers (NOAS) - Norway	No
RESCATE - Spain	Depending on the case.
Romanian National Council for Refugees (CNRR) - Romania	Yes, we sometimes receive the witness statement, especially in the case of questions sent by the asylum seekers’ lawyers.
Schweizerische Flüchtlingshilfe (SFH) - Switzerland	Yes, witness statement, refusal letter, determination, medical certificates...

21. What is your standard turnaround time for case specific research?

Asylos - Belgium/France/Greece/United Kingdom	Very varying and depending on the research case, it can range from two days to several months, depending on the research request.
Asylum Aid - United Kingdom	Not applicable
Asylum Protection Centre (APC) – Serbia	Two days
Asylum Research Consultancy (ARC) – United Kingdom	5 working days.
Austrian Centre for Country of Origin and Asylum (ACCORD) - Austria	10 working days; the average of working time for a query response including quality check is about 8 working hours.
Country Information Research Centre (CIREC) - Switzerland	It can range from several days to several months depending on the case and the delay granted. Indeed we are flexible enough to adapt to the legal counsellor's needs, and we do regularly follow-ups on cases. We respond to urgent demands as well as demands concerning cases that will be submitted for reconsideration.
Danish Refugee Council (DRC) - Denmark	It depends on the nature of the case, and may vary from a few hours to several weeks.
Dutch Council for Refugees (DCR) – The Netherlands	Within a week
Flemish Refugee Action - Belgium	1 to 2 days
Forum Réfugiés-COSI - France	2 to 3 days
Freedom from Torture - United Kingdom	Not applicable
Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society (HIAS) - Ukraine	1-2 days
Helsinki Foundation for Human Rights (HFHR) - Poland	At least a week to prepare and complete a research. (8/10 hours per report; around 3 hours for a research of sources, depends on a question or request, 2-4 hours for analysis, 3 hours for translation)
Human Rights League – Slovakia	[No answer provided]
Hungarian Helsinki Committee - Hungary	3-4 days
Informationsverbund Asyl & Migration - Germany	Not applicable
International Fund for Health and Environment Protection 'Region Karpat' (NEEKA) – Ukraine	1-5 days. It depends on the individual, additional materials, clients' condition, interpreters available, etc.
Kharkiv Regional Charitable Foundation "Social service of assistance"-UNHCR IP - Ukraine	Ranges from several hours up to several working days (depends on the difficulty of the case)
Legal Aid Board - Ireland	6-8 hours average research time per query. We have a minimum lead time of 5 working days.
Norwegian Organization for Asylum Seekers (NOAS) - Norway	[No answer provided]
RESCATE - Spain	Depending on the case. Around 10-15 days.
Romanian National Council for Refugees (CNRR) - Romania	2-3 days (including translation)
Schweizerische Flüchtlingshilfe (SFH) - Switzerland	Updates up to three months, Auskünfte up to six weeks, compilations within the same day

22. Would your organisation be interested in becoming part of an e-forum of COI-researchers (only NGO or independent units) that would serve as an information exchange platform? If so, who would be your main contact person in the preparation to establish such a platform?

Asylos - Belgium/France/Greece/United Kingdom	Yes, the contact person is Ellen Riotte
Asylum Aid - United Kingdom	Yes, given our involvement in COI as stated in question 1, we are interested in COI from a policy point of view but are not involved in researching COI, so our involvement with an e-forum would depend on whether it would be relevant on this basis. Contact person is Debora Singer.
Asylum Protection Centre (APC) – Serbia	Yes, we would like to become part of an e-forum of COI researchers. Contact person is Rados Djurovic.
Asylum Research Consultancy (ARC) – United Kingdom	Yes, contact person is Liz Williams.
Austrian Centre for Country of Origin and Asylum (ACCORD) - Austria	Yes, we are interested in developments of COI related issues in the NGO community. Contact person is Andrea Jakober.
Country Information Research Centre (CIREC) - Switzerland	Yes we would
Danish Refugee Council (DRC) - Denmark	Yes, as COI work is only a basis for our counselling responsibility we may not wish to participate as a full member. Contact person is Eva Singer.
Dutch Council for Refugees (DCR) – The Netherlands	Yes, very much. The contact person is Hiske van den Bergh.
Flemish Refugee Action - Belgium	Yes, contact person is Charlotte Vandycke charlotte@vluchtelingenwerk.be
Forum Réfugiés-COSI - France	Yes, Forum Réfugiés-Cosi would be interested in becoming part of the e-forum of COI researchers. Should we decide to participate in this initiative; the main contact person will be the person working for the documentation centre – Ms Delphine Grandcolas.
Freedom from Torture - United Kingdom	Yes, contact person is Jo Pettitt.
Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society (HIAS) - Ukraine	HIAS Kyiv would be happy to join an e-forum of COI-researchers. However, we would be interested to learn the goals of the platform and how it is supposed to operate. Contact person is Mr Sadek Ali Sharif.
Helsinki Foundation for Human Rights (HFHR) - Poland	Yes, we would be interested. Contact person is Mr. Maciej Fagasinki .
Human Rights League – Slovakia	Yes, Zuzana Številová, stevulova@hrl.sk Katarína Fajnorová, fajnorova@hrl.sk
Hungarian Helsinki Committee - Hungary	Yes, please send more information about this initiative to Tudor Rosu.
Informationsverbund Asyl & Migration - Germany	No, as our organisation does not undertake COI research, there is not very much we could contribute to such a forum
International Fund for Health and Environment Protection ‘Region Karpat’ (NEEKA) – Ukraine	We are interested to rise our skills in COI research and will be looking for the support and possibility to designate such person.
Kharkiv Regional Charitable Foundation “Social service of assistance”-UNHCR IP - Ukraine	Yes we are interested to be part of an e-forum
Legal Aid Board - Ireland	Yes, as the RDC acts as an independent Unit for government agencies within the asylum process in Ireland we could participate in an e-forum but we would not be in a position to conduct query responses on behalf of NGOs due to the limited staffing pool and scope of other research activity already ongoing in the unit. Contact: Niall Maher

Norwegian Organization for Asylum Seekers (NOAS) - Norway	Yes we would be interested in this. Our contact persons will be: Andreas Furusest and Jon Ole Martinsen.
RESCATE - Spain	Yes. Our contact person: Aurora González Conde.
Romanian National Council for Refugees (CNRR) - Romania	Yes, ROCCORD would be delighted to be part of the e-forum for COI researchers. The main contact person would be I, Alin Morariu, as I have been the project manager for the Romanian COI Portal as well.
Schweizerische Flüchtlingshilfe (SFH) - Switzerland	Yes, contact person is Adrian Schuster.